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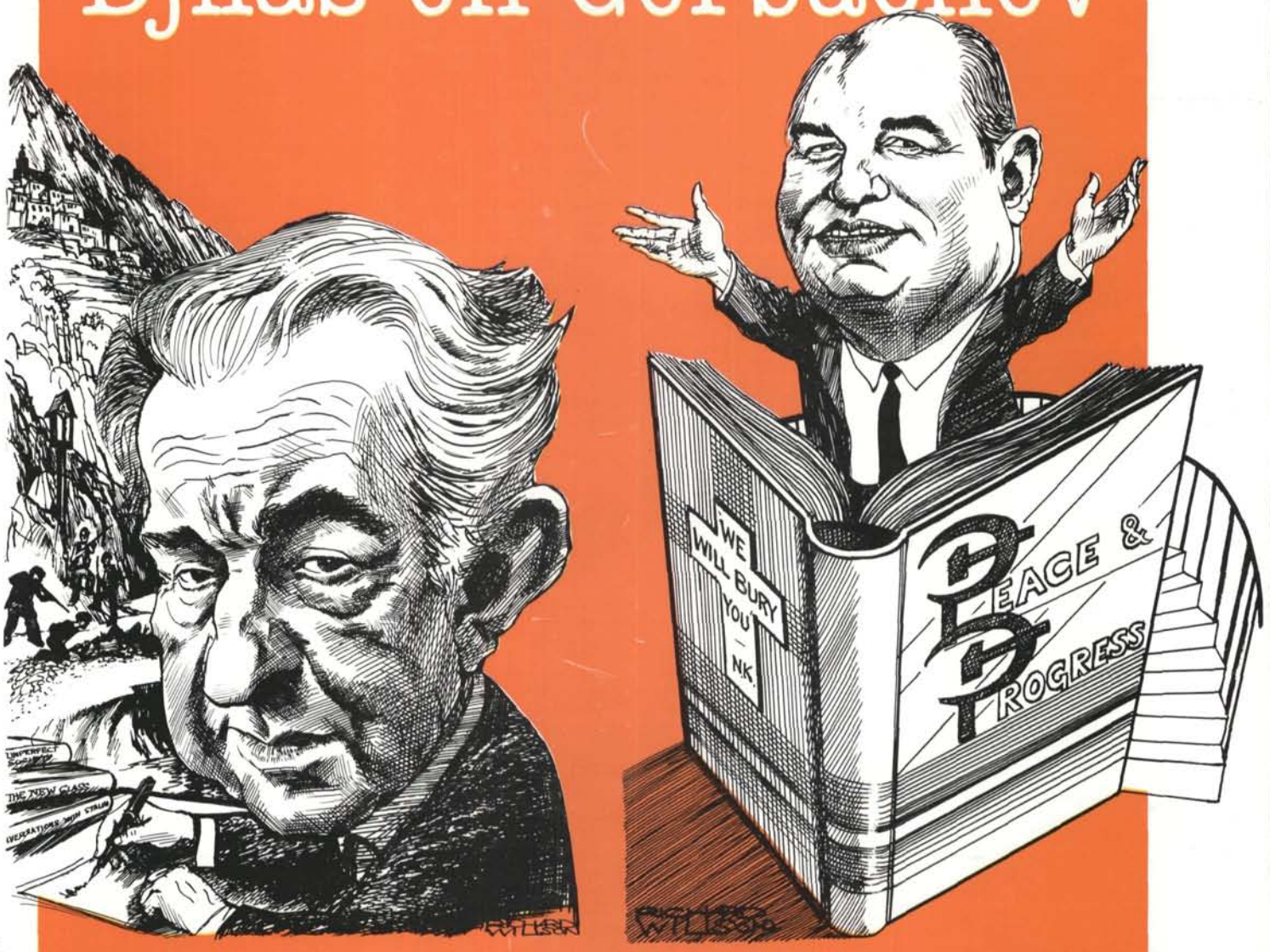
Djilas on Gorbachov



A Long Interview With George Urban

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Waldheim, TV, & a Case to Answer

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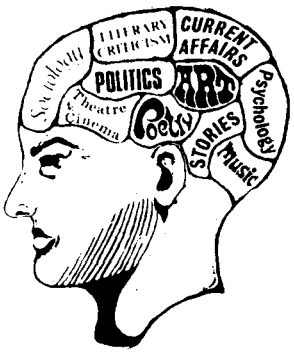
To Our Readers



WE WANT to thank you all! Earlier this year, we sent off a questionnaire to a random selection of our readers in the UK, USA, and Canada, at the request of the Gallup Poll organisation, which was embarking on a survey of ENCOUNTER's readership. We received a thousand replies. From analysis of this "representative sample", a profile of "the ENCOUNTER reader" emerged. London's newspapers, among them *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph*, found it interesting enough to report and comment on, some citing statistics of "the intellectuals' drinking habits" (mostly wine), others of their addiction to book-buying (11% buy over 100 hardbacks a year).

Many of you made extremely useful suggestions to us about ways in which we could improve our coverage. A number of people suggested that we might print more about the philosophy of science, about music, about history, and about the visual arts. Somebody suggested that we should write about detective stories. You may be pleased to know that we have taken all these suggestions on board and that our existing plans had already anticipated some of them. We greatly value this opportunity to establish a dialogue with some of our faithful readers. The Gallup results are also of great value to our publishing department and will help us to build the increased circulation and advertising which are vital to any magazine.

We ourselves should have liked to write personally to each and every reader who took the trouble to complete and return a long, cumbersome, and in places inquisitive questionnaire. But there were just too many for us to answer in detail in any intelligent, individual way. So all we can say is thank you. Nevertheless, we are tempted to reveal how much we like the reader profile that emerged, and how much we appreciate the answers to several of our provocative questions.

Is ENCOUNTER a journal which is "capable of changing" readers' opinions? An unprecedented 70% responded that they "tended to agree": they would, or could, or might change their minds. Do we flatter ourselves in thinking that this may be the point where intellectuals and ideologues part company? The ideologue reads to have his view reinforced; the intellectual has strong convictions, but is prepared to reconsider them in the light of new arguments, fresh evidence, or second thoughts.

Gallup also asked: "Compared to other magazines you read, how valuable is ENCOUNTER as a source of opinion in your professional/literary/social life?" A resounding 53% (with 66% in Canada) replied "More valuable". But ENCOUNTER intellectuals are obviously reluctant to act as "a herd of independent minds". Some 39% also replied, begging to differ slightly: "On a par with several other magazines". In the pluralist spirit of the day, that is fine with us.

M.J.L.
R.M.

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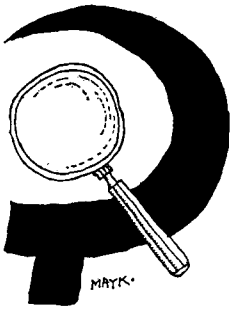
Between Revolution and Counter-Revolution

Djilas on Gorbachov

Milovan Djilas & George Urban in Conversation

1. Yugoslavia—Model or Anti-Model?



URBAN: *A "revolution within the revolution" is taking place in the Soviet Union—so we were told by the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in his speech at Murmansk (1 October 1987)—"a revolution without shots, but a deep and serious one. . . ." This is an astonishing claim. Gorbachov's language alone should give us pause, for there is nothing in the Marxist canons to suggest that the revolution of the proletariat could be anything but the final consummation of History, from which a new order of man would arise, "free from taint of present vice and past depravity".*

How then, can the leader of the Party of the victorious proletariat talk about "revolution" 70 years after the October Revolution? Was "Great October" not that universal reordering of human affairs that Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev said it was? Was it flawed in some essential respects we have not been told about? Did it go wrong, and if it did, who or what group of individuals was strong enough to thwart the will of History? Such are some of the questions the Soviet citizen is bound to ask without expecting to receive proper answers.

"Can the dictatorship of the proletariat be revamped into anything approaching a free and democratic society?"—this is the question Gorbachov's perestroika *raises for a disinterested historian, although it is not the one he is, on the face of it, asking of history. Whatever his rhetoric, Gorbachov appears to be content to pursue limited objectives. At home he seeks economic reconstruction and consumer satisfaction, and abroad, strength based on an economically and militarily powerful and well-respected Soviet system. All this within a selectively applied Marxist-Leninist ideology and under the rule of a single, albeit, reformed Party. These are, nevertheless, towering ambitions. The General Secretary himself may well be wondering whether the existing Soviet order is resilient enough to accommodate them.*

Two related questions come to mind. Can the Soviet system reform itself to an extent that would cause an independent observer to say: "The tyranny has gone—the system remains—but men of compromise can now live with it because it is, strictly speaking, no longer the Soviet system"? Second, can the Yugoslav example of devolution from totalitarianism to self-management and decentralisation serve as a model for Mikhail Gorbachov and his supporters?

DJILAS: The essence of any Communist system is the monopolistic rule of society by the Communist Party. Communism is about the possession of power. It is, moreover, about the possession of totalitarian power. Communism looks upon

---

MILOVAN DJILAS *was, until his fall from power in 1954, Vice-President of Yugoslavia, President of the Federal Parliament, and a Member of the Politburo and Central Committee. He was imprisoned under the Monarchy (1933-36), and under Tito (1956-61 and 1962-66). His publications include "The New Class" (1957), "Conversations with Stalin" (1962), "The Unperfect Society" (1969), "Tito: The Story From the Inside" (1981) and "Rise and Fall" (1985). He has published three volumes of autobiography, "Land without Justice" (1958), "Memoir of a Revolutionary" (1973), and "Wartime" (1977). Milovan Djilas lives as a freelance writer—uncensored, but occasionally harassed by the police—in Belgrade.*

GEORGE URBAN'S *contributions to* ENCOUNTER *include conversations with Vladimir Bukovsky (November 1987, January 1988), Alain Besançon (May and June 1987), Galina Vishnevskaya (December 1986, January 1987), Max M. Kampelman (February 1985), Alexander Zinoviev (April 1984), Jeane Kirkpatrick (November 1983), Eugene V. Rostow (April 1983), Daniel Bell (February 1983), W. Averell Harriman (November 1981), and Zbigniew Brzezinski (May 1981). His previous conversation with Milovan Djilas was published in the December 1979 issue of* ENCOUNTER. *"Can the Soviet System Survive Reform?", a collection of conversations by George Urban, will be published this autumn by John Spiers Ltd.*

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itself as fully entitled by the design of history to change and to control *not only* man's allegiances and behaviour as a political being, but also his readings, his tastes, his leisure time and, indeed, the whole of his private universe. Communism cannot, therefore, transform itself into a free society. That would be squaring the circle. What it can perhaps do, and what is now being attempted in the Soviet Union, is to make improvements in various economic and cultural areas, while keeping them, ostensibly at least, within the framework of the existing ideology.

Let us be quite clear about one thing: the Soviet leaders' attempt to reform the system is not inspired by some noble realisation that the system is unjust or poorly regarded abroad, but by strict necessity. They have come to realise what other Communists in Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and China realised much earlier—namely that Communism doesn't work. It works neither at the economic level nor at the level of satisfying essential human needs and liberties. Put all these factors side by side with the rapid technological advance of the Western and Far Eastern worlds and you cannot help realising that Communism is a 19th-century relic and a prescription for disaster.

The Soviet leaders are now trying to draw level with the modern world. Like politicians everywhere and at all times, they want to save their bacon; and they have come to see that they cannot save it without making concessions to reality. But it is only the *methods* of Communist rule that are now being challenged, not the rationale and character of the rule itself.

—The crisis of Communism is, as you have hinted, worldwide, but what is, ideologically speaking, so interesting (though historically much to be expected) is the variety of forms dissent and rebellion have taken in a once uniform and centrally inspired World Communist movement. I can detect two very important, common characteristics: the flight from any central model or authority, and the grudging admission that the command economies have failed because economic planning and human nature are on a collision course.

All the other centrifugal characteristics we now see coming into play have to do with national identity, culture, religion and group interests. Kazaks want to be Kazaks; Armenians to be Armenians; Estonians to be Estonians; and so on. The national—and racial—factor, long denied, derided or swept under the carpet by Marxist-Leninists, has reasserted itself. It will, I suspect, assert itself even more forcefully as Gorbachov's drive for economic decentralisation and autonomous management gathers disciples in unexpected places.

DJILAS: The crisis from Belgrade to Peking is continuous. Every Communist country suffers from the inbuilt inadequacies of the system. Most are now trying to put things right through piecemeal economic and social engineering. Those who offered more drastic remedies—the Hungarians in 1956 and the Czechoslovaks in 1968—were ruthlessly suppressed. (And I am, incidentally, not putting an equation mark between the two because they were differently inspired.)

What we now have in the world is a kaleidoscope of Communist societies, each struggling to keep its head above water, each still militant in its rhetoric but straining to go its own way, even though some are not free to do so. International Communism no longer exists as an organised force. What Communists still have in common is a joint vocabulary and the will to monopolistic power. That is a lot, but not enough. Moscow as the seat of the Communist papacy has gone. Stalin as the grand vizier has gone too. Any analysis of the roots of Communism in the world today has to be specific to the circumstances of each country. Few generalisations are possible except one—Communism of the Soviet type is and will always remain totalitarian. The totalitarian character of the system may be more predominant, or less, depending on local conditions. But it is one of the iron laws of Soviet-style Communism that the moment there is a crisis and the survival of the system is threatened, the totalitarian component takes over.

WOULD YOU SAY, *in that case, that the Gorbachov initiatives are untypical? or will not prove to be lasting? After all, we are told by the General Secretary himself that the USSR is in a pre-crisis situation (even if not in a fully fledged one). If so, it is the old totalitarians who should be calling the shots—if your reading of the system is correct—and not new-fangled reformers like Gorbachov.*

DJILAS: The jury is still out on that question. The Soviet system is in an economic crisis, not (or not yet) in a general crisis of the sort that threatened Hungary's régime, for example, in the 1955-56 period. We shall have to wait and see how the Soviet economic crisis develops and how the totalitarians react to Gorbachov's rescue operation. The Ligachevs and Chebrikovs make no secret of their fears that the Gorbachov reforms may explode in their faces—as they may well do.

—Instinctive return to a protective old orthodoxy is a standard reaction in every human crisis, whether collective or individual. "Hold on to nurse for fear of worse."

The Communists, too, behave like that, only more so, because they are nature's zealots. Your study of Tito provides a telling illustration of the flight to orthodoxy in Communist thinking. I have in mind the passage where you and Tito discuss the kind of political freedom Yugoslavia should be given after the triumph of Communism.

DJILAS: I suggested to Tito that we should allow for an opposition—and free elections. Tito said that we should phrase the laws in such a way that while free elections would be on the statute books the Communists would, nevertheless, always retain the monopoly of power. It was, he argued, unacceptable for Communists to be ejected from power on the whim of an electorate once they had been installed in power by the will of history (or words to that effect). Tito reacted as a typical Communist.

—I find the Communists' contempt for the will of the majority and their parallel insistence on the "democratic" character of their system endlessly fascinating. "Democracy is not identical with majority rule. . . . Democracy is . . . an organisation for the systematic use of violence by one class against another",

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Lenin observed in "The State and Revolution". And, recently, Teresa Toranska, in her compelling interviews with some of the Stalinist Polish old-guard[1] *elicited these words from Poland's once powerful Jakub Berman:*

> **". . . in an election, we can't go by the criterion of the majority, because there isn't any one we can hand over power to. . . . Well, whom would you have had us hand over power to? To Mikolajczyk, perhaps? . . . You'll be telling me in a moment it would have been democratic if we had. So what? Who needs that kind of democracy? And we can have no more free elections now than we could ten or twenty years ago, even less so, because we'd lose. There is no doubt about that. So what's the point of such an election? . . ."**

DJILAS: A typical ultra-conservative attitude. Yet we must not allow it to colour all our judgments about the renewability of Communism. The arrival of Mikhail Gorbachov demonstrates what some of us have long suspected—that certain indigenous Communist parties, notably the Yugoslav and the Soviet, have sufficient inner resources left in them to shed the Stalinist incrustations and make a fresh start. The Soviet Party did have democratic features in its early history. Gorbachov is trying to water that desiccated plant and revive it. It is not an easy task because, even under Lenin, Soviet democracy was a highly limited affair—nothing a man sitting in Westminster or in the *Bundestag* would recognise as democracy.

—Would Gorbachov be aided by the Yugoslav model? Until Tito's death that model attracted many admirers and emulators in the East European Communist parties. More recently, however, Yugoslavia itself has fallen on hard times. The economy is in dire straits, corruption is rife, and the Republics are drawing apart.

DJILAS: Yugoslavia is both an example and a counter-example. It is an example in the sense that it demonstrates the reality of the conflict between the totalitarian and reformist wings of any Communist Party and the possibility of the defeat of the totalitarians. It is a counter-example in the sense that a speedy devolution of power from the centre to the autonomous constituent Republics can lead to chaos.

To take the positive model first. Yugoslavia has become a kind of laboratory for the destiny of Communism world-wide. The show (even if not the reality) of self-management, cultural liberalisation, local autonomy, economic partnership with the West, has marked her out as a front runner. But, more important, the Party is also vaguely groping for a re-conceptualisation of the whole Communist experiment. The conservative old-guard has not been finally defeated, but it is in a minority and probably in permanent opposition. At the same time, the "reformers" cannot be said to be in power either. The majority of Yugoslav Communists are in a state of alienation and grave disaffection, as is the majority of the population outside the Party. Between them they keep the Stalinist hard-liners at bay and the leadership under pressure—without quite knowing how precisely to set about reforming the system and attracting public support.

Local autonomy has led to great variations in the hardline/softline spectrum. Semi-independent fiefdoms have developed—some hardline such as the Republic of Bosnia, and some liberal such as Slovenia. Centrifugal nationalistic interests are frequently intertwined with vested personal and institutional interests. If Yugoslavia is a positive model, it is easier to *feel* than to describe what it is; and that may not be too helpful to Gorbachov.

—Then, in the final analysis, Yugoslavia demonstrates a reckoning with paleo-Communism of whatever provenance, and probably a recognition that the whole idea of putting Leninism into practice is absurd.

DJILAS: It does both, but let me add a note of caution. As paleo-Communism is now a relic, so the language of old-fashioned anti-Communism should be. There is a kind of gutter-critique of Communist thinking that was probably justified by its effects during the Cold War but is now wholly counter-productive. It is puerile to say that "all Communists are tarred with the same brush" or "once a Communist, always a Communist". That sort of rhetoric, quite apart from being false, now plays directly into the hands of the old guard. I am, of course, not saying that we should soften our critique of Communism as a flawed or even impossible social system. But we should address the system with the seriousness and intellectual discernment it deserves. Millions of people have, willy-nilly, come to live under Communism. We owe it to them to offer an intellectually respectable, well-argued, and realistic alternative. The Hollywood-type of anti-Communism will not do. We have seen too much sloganeering, and too little mature assimilation of the social and intellectual history of Marxism and Leninism.

BUT ISN'T it possible that too much study of the history and of the rationale of Communism tends to make us subliminally accept the Marxist-Leninists' terms of reference? (Hasn't it happened in many foreign ministries and research establishments?) And doesn't this approach undermine our ability to think about Communism with complete freedom? American conservatives of the country club type tend to say: "Don't plague us with the 'theology'! We know perfectly well what's wrong with Communism without having to bother our heads about its indigestible literature. We can tell an evil system when we see one. . . ." That sort of approach was President Reagan's great strength early in his Presidency, and it put the Kremlin on the defensive.

DJILAS: There is no case for that approach now. Are you suggesting that a judge who is sophisticated enough to study the jargon of the thieves who will come before him becomes their accomplice? Of course he doesn't. But he has to understand, when considering the case, what the defendants are talking about.

[1] Teresa Toranska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets* (tr. Agnieska Kolakowska, Collins Harvill, 1987).

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—The moment we adopt words such as glasnost *and* perestroika *into English, French, German or Italian, we bring a good deal of Mikhail Gorbachov's thinking with them. He is aware of this and is proud of it. Isn't that a warning that the "crude" American conservatives may have a better instinctive understanding of what the Communist system is about than trendy journalists and policy-pundits?*

DJILAS: No. The answer to a foggy understanding of the Soviet system is a clear understanding of the Soviet system. The answer to subliminal propaganda is reason and the knowledge of history. You can't cut corners in the study of human affairs.

—I would have thought Gorbachov would do well to extract at least one practical lesson from recent developments in Yugoslavia—the rising vulnerability of the "dominant" nation in a multiracial state, once decentralisation has taken effect. I am thinking of a by now famous "unfinished memorandum" of the Serbian Academy of September 1986.

DJILAS: Well, this remarkable document did indeed give an important warning. It claimed that the largest nation in Yugoslavia has been reduced to unequal status, not least because the Serbs (unlike their neighbours in Croatia and Slovenia) have not been allowed to create their own state, or to use their own language and alphabet. The academicians said that this inferiority of the Serbs *vis-à-vis* the other nations of Yugoslavia was due largely to the 1974 Constitution which had turned the country's Federal system into a loose Confederation. Individual republics had acquired the right to veto the will of the majority, and the Serbs came to be looked upon as "hegemonists", "centralisers" and "policemen".

WOULDN'T ALL THIS *have a familiar ring to people like Alexander Zinoviev, Vladimir Maximov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn? They would argue (as, in fact, they have done) that in the Soviet Union, too, it is the dominant nation that is now the underdog. It is the Russian heritage, they would claim, that has been distorted by an imported ideology. It is Russian living standards that are way below those of the Baltic republics, Armenia and Georgia. Disproportionate numbers of the most influential jobs are being held by non-Russians in the* apparat, *in the armed forces and in culture. Russia is being de-Russified, they argue, and deprived of its character. These have become favourite Russian themes in the Soviet Union; and they have their followers within and outside the Party.*

I would have thought Gorbachov would be well advised not to follow the Yugoslav example if the status of the Russian nation within the Union is dear to him. The question is: Can he sustain democratisation and openness as his key policies without giving fresh relevance to the right of national self-determination as guaranteed in Article 70 of the current Soviet Constitution? What would there be to prevent Armenians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Latvians and Ukrainians from saying: "Democracy must surely begin at home—we want our own form of government and our independence"?

In a remarkable appeal to the 19th All-Union Party Conference, the Plenum of the boards of the Estonian "Creative Unions" has already said so, and has had its message printed in the official press[2]*:*

> **"It is relations between the Republics and the Union bodies, joined voluntarily to form the Soviet Union, which are at issue here. It is the need to re-establish the Leninist principles of sovereignty and equal rights."**

And if this were not explicit enough, Heinz Valk, a rank and file member, reminded the Plenum:

> **"Nigol Andresen [one of the first Estonian People's Commissars] said on 22 July 1940: 'The joining of the Socialist People's Union as a nation, as a formerly separate state, should not be understood by others, who are evil-minded thinkers, as the abolition of our independence. . . .' At the same time, however, a man who is well known to us was twirling his moustache in the Kremlin and thought of the matter quite differently . . . according to Article 60 of the Estonian SSR Constitution, Estonia is indeed a sovereign state. . . . Why is it that a sovereign state, which can decide its affairs independently, must ask Moscow even for permission to publish a newspaper?"**

DJILAS: The analogy between Serbs and Russians is tempting but not quite right. The Serbs are not a hegemonistic nation in Yugoslavia; the Russians are *very* much a hegemonistic people in the Soviet Union (whatever Solzhenitsyn, Maximov, Zinoviev and their followers may be saying to the contrary). True, Great Russian nationalism is, officially at least, not much in evidence qua nationalism; but the elder-brother role of the Russian nation through the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the imperial bureaucracy is crystal clear and openly cultivated. For example, until not so many years ago, the national anthem of the Azerbaidzhan Republic contained these words: "The mighty Russian brother is bringing to the land the triumph of freedom and with our blood we have strengthened our friendship and our kinship with him. . . ."

—Even today, the Uzbeks start their anthem with the phrase: "Hail, Russian brother, great is your people!"

DJILAS: In other words, the Czarist legacy is alive and well. Centralisation, linguistic imperialism, the denationalisation of ethnic cultures of large parts of the Soviet Union, notably of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, are long-standing features of Soviet life. They have grown out of Russian history which is a history of centralisation and of expansion.

Russia did not follow the European path from nationhood to statehood. Muscovy came first—the Russian sense of nationhood came later. Hence the Russian people's obsessive fear that the state may disintegrate; that if the state loses its grip, the Russian nation might fall or be gravely weakened. That the Communist system, too, promotes centralisa-

[2] *Sirp ja Vasar*, 15 April 1988.

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tion for its own reasons is a bonus and a happy coincidence.

None of this is true for the Serbs. The erosion of Serb standing among the nations of Yugoslavia cannot, therefore, be quoted as a warning to Gorbachov without a great many qualifications.

But you are right in saying that "openness", "democratisation" and "restructuring" give hostages to fortune in their own right. One cannot, as Gorbachov and his friends do, preach the freedom of the spirit, democratic participation and individual initiative without encouraging the Ukrainian citizen to ask: "And why should I be taught in the Russian language when my language is Ukrainian?" Or Estonians to protest: "We don't want to be swamped by Russians in our cities—put a limit on Russian immigration." Or Armenians—including Armenian Communists—to demand the revision of their Republic's frontiers, as they have, in fact, done in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Gorbachov and his friends preach to the Soviet people every day of the week about the "truth" which, they say, can at long last be spoken openly in Soviet society. After 50 years of suppressing the truth, Viktor Yakovlev reported in Kaluga Oblast (14 July 1987) "our collective return to the truth". If this is so, I can hardly imagine how the truth of national self-determination or the "truth that socialism may not be everyone's choice of an ideal society" can be barred from open discussion, or divorced from the process of democratic "restructuring". For many people *glasnost* and *perestroika* may mean precisely non-socialism and independence.

—Such claims, still scored in the approved key, are already being widely heard; and Gorbachov does not like them. At his meeting with representatives of the Soviet media (in July 1987) the following exchange was recorded ("Pravda", 14 July 1987):

> **"A. A. Belyayev (Editor-in-Chief of "Sovietskaya Kultura"): 'The awareness of the international essence of Soviet socialist culture is disappearing from the speeches of certain personalities in the arts who advocate the originality and purity of national cultures.'**
>
> **M. S. Gorbachov: 'Every people has its language, its history, it wants to understand its roots. Can that be contrary to socialism? Of course not. But on the other hand, if someone retires into himself, struts about and starts passing this off as an absolute value—that is unacceptable.'"**

Echoing Gorbachov but speaking more openly in Hungary, Alexander Yakovlev put the Soviet fears bluntly (Hungarian TV, 30 July 1987).

> **"Nationality policy requires special tact and extreme sensitivity. When any kind of friction starts to develop regarding the nationalities, this can swell into an avalanche irrespective of the endeavours or wishes of this or that person."**

DJILAS: The Armenian-Azerbaidzhani conflict has proved Alexander Yakovlev only too right. On 9 July 1988, in Vilnius, a large gathering of more than 100,000 people, representing the three Baltic Republics and a pro-*perestroika* group from Byelorussia, heard calls supporting the Armenian plea for the self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh. The call of nationalism travels with great speed.

The Soviet leaders *are* worried, and with good reason. Shortly after Gorbachov's visit to Yugoslavia, Fyodor Burlatsky warned: "Yugoslavia shows us the limits of decentralisation. . . . We have to lessen central power, but not go as far as Yugoslavia. . . ."

But let me add, before we lose the point, that there is, of course, a small element of truth in the Solzhenitsyn-Zinoviev-Maximov type of argument about the "unequal" state of the Russian nation. It's true that the ordinary Russian bears the main burden of empire, without sharing its blessings. But the fact is: almost every Russian, lowly or elevated, embraces with enthusiasm the idea of Russian aggrandisement and takes for granted that he has to make sacrifices for it. He compensates for these sacrifices by the conscious enjoyment of Russian hegemony—a hegemony which is now donning the mantle of "socialism".

Lenin who was, by Russian standards, tolerant towards the non-Russian nations of the empire and was hard on "Great Russian chauvinism",[3] nevertheless reconquered almost all those bits of the Czarist Empire that had taken pre-1917 Bolshevik propaganda seriously and seceded from the new Communist state. He quashed Ukrainian independence; retook Georgia after the Georgians had been solemnly assured (in the Treaty of 7 May 1920) that their independence would be respected; invaded Khiva and Bukhara; and so on. By the end of the Civil War all parts of the far-flung Czarist Empire were back under Bolshevik Russian rule, with the exception of Finland, Poland, and the Baltic states (which had become independent under international recognition) and Bessarabia (which had been annexed by Romania).

WHAT YOU ARE *saying is that even a reforming and apparently tolerant Gorbachov, with* glasnost *and democratisation on his lips, would not permit his ideas to be translated into independent national, much less separatist policies, no matter what the Soviet Constitution may be saying about "self-determination" and, indeed (under Article 72), about the right of every Republic "freely to secede from the USSR"?*

DJILAS: That is what I believe to be the case. In Communist theory "socialism" is a superior form of social organisation for nations which are supposed to be transitional ("consciousness lagging behind life"). This is, clearly, rubbish. But it has always given the Soviet leaders an excellent excuse for denying restive Uzbeks and Tatars self-determination and their right to independence.

Mind you, my impression is that Gorbachov will have to go a long way towards meeting national and ethnic demands, even if he does not underwrite the independence of his colo-

[3] Lenin wrote (on 31 December 1922): ". . . not only formal equality is needed . . . it is necessary to compensate in one way or another . . . the non-Russian for that mistrust, that suspicion and those insults which in the historical past the government of the 'great power' nation inflicted upon him."

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nial territories. The logic of his own propaganda will confront him, in Hegelian fashion, with some highly unexpected and unpleasant consequences. This may not be a bad time for the Baltic nations, the Ukrainians, the Uzbeks and others to come forward with their demands—as the Armenians have already done, and the Estonians and Latvians are in the process of doing. For a start, the Soviet leadership would have to agree to respect the Soviet Constitution and to live up to their commitments under principle VIII of the Helsinki Accords which spells out every nation's right to self-determination. The resolution of the All-Union 19th Party Conference on the "relations between nationalities" has fudged the issue.

—The problem (as Moscow would see it) with the Armenian demand for the re-incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Armenian Republic was that it had, originally, no anti-Russian or anti-"socialist" edge. It fed on the ancient Armenian conflict with Islam and the injustices of Stalin's nationality policy. It was, therefore, difficult—though not impossible—to brand it as "nationalism" and "extremism".

Doesn't the ethnic distribution of Armenian Christians inside Azerbaidzhan and of Muslim Azeris in Armenia—and the current tension between the two nations—remind you of the terrible things that happened to Serbs living in Croatia and Croats living in Serbia during World War II?

DJILAS: Yes, it does; but there is an important difference. In pre-Communist Yugoslavia, no one imagined that the state, or its governing philosophy, offered a magical cure for the elimination of national conflicts. Communism does make such a claim. Consequently, the Armenian upheavals strike at the very heart of the contention ("myth" would be a more appropriate word) that proletarian consciousness, Soviet rule and "internationalism" automatically heal the feuds and absorb the conflicts among nations. Of the many misconceptions underlying Communist rule, this may turn out to be the most lethal.

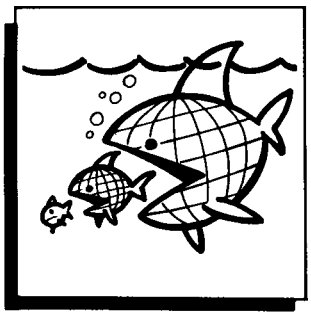
—Article 78 of the present Constitution says that the boundaries of the USSR's Republics may be changed only by the agreement of the Republics concerned and with Moscow's approval.

DJILAS: This will make Gorbachov's job even more difficult, for I cannot see the Azeris agreeing to surrender Nagorno-Karabakh, or how Moscow could overrule them—assuming that it wished to, which it does not. It has, in fact, decided to suppress the Armenian protest.

The 23 March 1988 resolution of the Praesidium of the USSR makes the point that giving way to the Armenian demand would spell the end of the "friendship of the peoples of the USSR as an integral, federal, multinational state". It would lead to "unpredictable consequences". And so it might! Yet, on 12 July 1988, the Governing Council (Soviet) of Nagorno-Karabakh announced its secession from Azerbaidzhan and declared itself an autonomous region of Armenia under the ancient Armenian name of Artsakh—which the Azerbaidzhani Supreme Council immediately rejected.

Remember Gorbachov's words in his 70th anniversary oration. In 1917, he said, "mankind crossed the threshold of real history . . . we departed from the old world and irreversibly rejected it". Well, Nagorno-Karabakh demonstrates that, stripped of the utopian rhetoric, Soviet reality bears an uncanny resemblance to the "old world" which has, after all, not been so "irreversibly" rejected.

2. *"The New Class" as Early Warning*



As long as the Russian element, both inside and outside the Communist establishment, persists in believing that it has a right to rule, one cannot see how regional bids for independence, or even "sovereignty, Soviet-style" can be successful. And there are no signs that the Russian nation would allow its estate to shrink. In the matter of "Empire", the Party and the Russian nation seem to speak with one voice. The loss of a Union Republic would be a blow to Russian hegemony and it would probably spell the end of the Soviet Union as well as Gorbachov himself. Aren't we, therefore, unduly optimistic to expect that Gorbachov will live up to his words on the peripheries of the Empire—or else admit that the "truth" relevant to economic perestroika *does not apply to "the colonies"?*

DJILAS: The Soviet Communists have never shrunk from locking up loquacious mullahs and suppressing "bourgeois nationalism". Of course, Gorbachov and his men do not relish the prospect of Muslim fundamentalism reaching their own Muslim territories from Iran, for example. But they can deal with it so long as the disease stays outside the Party and the *apparat*. They are experts at suppressing nationalism and organised religion. What they must be worried about is the penetration of the *Party* and the *bureaucracy* by nationalism and religion. When the local Party, too, wants to pull away from the Centre because it is closer to the nation it rules than to the power-holders in Moscow—that is when the alarm bells should start ringing in the Kremlin. And this is what appears to have happened in Alma Ata and is now happening, on a much larger scale, in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Baltic Republics. In Kazakhstan, Gorbachov used the whip hand because he would take no risks with the Empire. He then packed the Kazakh leadership with Russians and had the ringleaders punished. He behaved very much like a competent Czar.

—The "indigenisation" of Bolshevism has produced some unexpected consequences. It was Stalin's fervent ambition that "indigenisation" would deepen the roots of Soviet rule in the peripheral national communities. And so it did, under Stalin. Under Gorbachov, however, it seems to be promoting the "nationalisation" of the local Party and the apparat, *with the results we now witness with increasing frequency. In Armenia*

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and Nagorno-Karabakh, the Communist apparatus as well as the Armenian Church under Vazgen I, the Supreme Patriarch, came out openly (26 February 1988) in support of attaching Nagorno-Karabakh to Soviet Armenia. Some of the first calls for the rehabilitation of the victims of Stalin came from within the Latvian and Estonian Communist establishments.

But coming back to Yugoslavia: in the matter of regional independence the Yugoslav model must surely strike Gorbachov as, literally, counter-productive. Liberalisation of the Federal structure has turned Yugoslavia into so many mini-states: each with its opinionated and often recalcitrant local leadership, and each conceiving of itself as a self-contained oligarchy (tempered, though, by degrees of corruption commensurate with local tradition). Whatever Gorbachov may think of the successes (such as they are) of the self-management system, he cannot want to go down the road of Federal decentralisation.

DJILAS: No, he cannot. But I can quite see why those who want the Soviet Union to disintegrate encourage him to follow "the Yugoslav model". Bids for various forms of national separatism are now openly made in Yugoslavia. In Slovenia, where criticism of the central government is strongest, influential people argue for an "independent Slovenia" in the European community. In 1971, some Croats, too, wanted autonomy under the UN, a separate currency and the reform of certain institutions—because Croatia, in their view, had become the paymaster of the poorer Republics. Even in Serbia, a feeling of disaffection with the Federal state is now gaining ground, partly because Belgrade has been unable to defend the lives and property of Serbs in the Albanian province of Kosovo, and partly for the reasons we have quoted from the memorandum of the Serbian Academy.

—I suppose Gorbachov would be equally ill-advised to take his cue from the state of the Yugoslav League of Communists?

DJILAS: Yes, he would. The Yugoslav League of Communists is in deep crisis, not only because of its poor social and economic performance, but because it is split, in reality, into eight parties. Each represents the interests of a national Republican constituency. The bonds uniting them in Belgrade are weak; they all pull in separate directions. They are united, though, in their distrust of what they call the Federal Party. On the surface they are not anti-Yugoslav or anti-Serbian; but their suspicion of the central bureaucracy does make it seem to many Serbs that they are hostile to the most numerous nation in the Federation. In short: the story of "decentralisation of Communism" in Yugoslavia along national lines is bad news for Gorbachov.

HOW IS THE *spirit of Gorbachov's reforms going to affect the future of Moscow's East and Central European dependencies? The Soviet-Yugoslav Declaration (of 19 March 1988) appears to have repudiated the Brezhnev Doctrine. It contains, in Section II devoted to inter-Party relations, these words:*

> **"Proceeding from the conviction that no one has a monopoly of the truth, the sides declare their lack of any claim to impose their own ideas about social development upon anyone else whomsoever."**

Even more important, in the inter-State section, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia

> **". . . confirm their commitment to the policy of peace and the independence of the peoples and countries, their equality of rights, the equal security of all countries irrespective of their size and potential, socio-political system, the ideas by which they are guided and the forms and character of their associations with other states or their geographical position."**

I would be surprised if some of the East and Central European nations didn't conclude that the time was ripe for fresh moves to be made to free them from the apron-strings of the Kremlin. And this feeling would, in some cases, be as strong within the Parties as with the public in general. In Hungary, for example, a bold but cautiously formulated "social contract" has been drafted by one influential group of dissidents. It foresees what one might call "Constitutional Communism" and some recovery of Hungarian independence within a more tolerant and economically weakened Soviet Empire. It would, above all, do away with the extra-legal status of the Communist Party and subject it to the control of a duly elected parliament. Another and more radical group ("Network of Free Initiatives") calls for a multi-party system and the removal of Soviet troops from Hungary.

The intriguing question is: have the Gorbachov reforms put the "national question" on the agenda? In a recent lecture (in London, on 28 January 1988), Zbigniew Brzezinski said that they have.

> **"The region as a whole [Brzezinski observed] is experiencing today both political liberalisation and economic retrogression—a classic formula . . . for revolution. . . . It is not inappropriate to pose the historically pregnant question of whether the year 1988 might not be initiating the new "Spring of Nations" in Europe, a parallel to 1848. It is no exaggeration to affirm that there are five countries now in Eastern Europe, each of which is potentially ripe for a revolutionary explosion. It is no exaggeration to say that this could happen in more than one at the same time."**

DJILAS: First, I do not take the "repudiation" of the Brezhnev doctrine at face value. In 1955, Khrushchev and Bulganin "went to Canossa" in Belgrade. A Declaration was signed which was every bit as forceful in asserting each country's right to absolute sovereignty and to non-interference in each other's internal affairs "for whatever reason", as is the March 1988 joint Declaration. Yet, one year later, the Soviet Union was threatening Poland and crushing the Hungarian Uprising.

Second, the national question is not yet openly on the agenda in Eastern Europe, but I have no doubt that, if the pace in Moscow continues, it will be put there. I do not, however, believe that the developments of 1956 will be repeated. Khrushchev's revelations about Stalinism led to the rise of Gomulka in Poland, which in turn sparked off the

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With Gorbachov in Belgrade

Belgrade

YUGOSLAVS *are complaining that they are in an economic and political mess, but anybody arriving in Belgrade from Moscow is struck instantly by the comparative pleasantness of life in a vaguely communist country that sits neither side of the iron curtain but now feels much closer in spirit to the West.*

For a Muscovite, Belgrade is a breath of fresh air. As for Slovenia, the northwestern area of Yugoslavia, nestling against the Italian and Austrian border, it seems almost paradise.

Mr Gorbachov, who yesterday finished his five-day Yugoslav jaunt, must have noticed. But I doubt that he wants to imitate it.

THE TROUBLE WITH **Yugoslavia, from the Kremlin viewpoint, is that the Yugoslav Communist Party—the "League of Communists"—barely exists: it has just enough authority to block effective change but not enough to rule and reform. And Slovenia, as the Slovenes say, hardly seems part of Yugoslavia at all: in attitude and prosperity, it has gone West.**

THE FIRST REALISATION *as you leave the plane is that people are materially better off. Many Yugoslavs are poor, especially further south, and with 160% inflation and $23 billion in foreign debt, many are growing poorer.*

Unlike Muscovites, however, they have a decent diet, and do not have to queue for meat and other basics. In winter they are not short of vegetables and fruit. They have cars—including a great many Mercedes.

LJUBLJANA, **the Slovenian capital, spry and beautiful, makes Moscow look like a grubby Hicksville. Coming from Moscow, one is childishly delighted by the service with a smile, the bustling waiters with real menus, the doorman offering to carry your case.**

Far more significant, though, is a feeling that Yugoslavs are not psychologically and physically fenced in. By entering a smart hotel one does not step through a loop into a world of abnormality from which most of the natives are excluded, where gruff doormen look you over, check people in and out, demand your reason to be there. It was ludicrously agreeable just to walk into a hotel alongside casual Yugoslavs.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE *to overstate the power, on the mind, of travel. Millions of Yugoslavs have visited the West. Very few Russians have. Slovenes watch Italian and Austrian television. Information flows uninhibited.*

A Belgrader can buy a "Daily Telegraph" on the day of publication, while "Pravda" comes a week late and is little read. Yugoslavs make a point of not speaking Russian, even though many of the middle-aged learnt it and it is close to their own Slav tongues.

In Moscow, people are still remarkably insulated. I often suspect that even top Soviet Party-men, despite their special sources, see the West through the filter of the 70-year-old ideology and gobbledegook which still publicly prevail.

THE KEY DIFFERENCE **between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is that in most of the satellites, especially Poland and Hungary, few people believe in communism, because they know the West. They are part of its culture and history.**

In Russia, not everyone loves the Party but they accept it as the "guiding light", while old-fashioned Russian nationalism helps the Party in times of stress. In Yugoslavia, not even members of the Communist Party give the impression of believing in communism.

THERE ARE *1,000-plus political prisoners in the country, mostly nationalists who feel more Albanian or Croat than Yugoslav. But the sense of social-cum-political control is absent, partly because of alternate centres of power and wealth.*

The churches, unlike the Orthodox in Russia, are not craven. Peasants still own 83 per cent of agricultural land. Moonlighting and black-market activity are even more open and widespread than in the USSR. Money floods in from relatives in the West.

In a partly-successful attempt to cope with nationalism, each Republic has a high degree of autonomy. As ideology fades, national identity sharpens and the federal centre wobbles.

INSTINCTIVELY, MR GORBACHOV **would have sniffed at what he learnt of Yugoslavia's nationalities puzzle: not for him such a long leash for Armenians or Estonians or the many Soviet others.**

But Yugoslavian ethnic diversity increases the mood of pluralism. All the same, Yugo-liberalism has limits. "We have glasnost but we don't have political 'perestroika'", says a clever and affluent lawyer, who would have been hounded out of business in Russia. "We have freedom without democracy."

THE CURIOUS ECONOMIC SYSTEM *of "socialist self-management" is supposed to give workers control of enterprises. To a degree it does and they regularly go on strike to prove it (horrors for Mr Gorbachov).*

It fails when local Party bureaucrats bred on Communist patronage oppose profit-seeking commonsense and people getting rich without permission. As Mr Gorbachov may discover when his similar stand-on-your-own-feet incentives start to rock his factories, a single Party and a real market invariably clash.

ON WEDNESDAY **the cheekiest Slovene magazine, "Mladina", tried to call for a market economy integrated with the West, for the abolition of the current "political monopoly" and a host of other radical reforms: this time, its nerve too raw, the Party banned it. But "Mladina" still exists.**

THINKING YUGOSLAVS *are sceptical about Mr Gorbachov's reforms but wish him well. "Of course, he is 30 years behind us", they say grandly. They think that if he gets as far as they have, he will run aground on the concepts of "socialist pluralism" and "market socialism". They are contradictory.*

Mr Gorbachov may have noticed that Yugoslav glasnost has led people to despise their Communist Party. Neither the weak Yugoslav party nor the strong Soviet one can contemplate allowing "pluralism" to reach its logical conclusion: allowing people to vote Communism out of office.

It is just conceivable that, one day, in Yugoslavia, it may happen.

Xan Smiley

in the DAILY TELEGRAPH (*London*)

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Hungarian Uprising. Gorbachov appears to be a man of much greater intelligence, prudence and foresight than Khrushchev. He has, so far at least, not held up Stalin to national obloquy, although he and his supporters often speak meaningfully of the illegalities and the "tragedy" of 1937-38. His formula is that despite the injustices of the 1937-38 period the story of Soviet socialism is one of overall success. To give those injustices undue emphasis would damage the self-esteem of the Soviet people and create unnecessary divisions,.

Although my own convictions run absolutely counter to this tactic—I believe the crimes of Stalin must be named and the Stalinists given no quarter—I recognise the prudence of Gorbachov's caution. This is one reason why I do not expect the Gorbachov reforms to be interpreted by the East-European satellites in a manner that would lead to a violent rejection of the system.

—At the 19th All-Union Party Conference, Gorbachov announced that a monument would be erected to the victims of Stalin. Will that not open up countless old wounds and raise the demand for figures to be given and the perpetrators to be punished?

DJILAS: It might, but I believe Gorbachov is strong enough to control any turbulence. This is a "revolution" from above. Although Gorbachov would like it to become a more spontaneous affair, because that is what his battle with the bureaucracy now requires, it is not in his or in the Party's interest that de-Stalinisation should lead to a genuine revolution from below, for that would mean the end of the system.

My second reason for believing that the Soviet reforms will not cause Eastern Europe to go up in flames is that the Soviet leaders—all of them, from Khrushchev to Gorbachov—have learnt certain lessons from the bloody events in Hungary in 1956. They learnt that national sentiment is not to be trifled with—and however savage the retribution after 1956 may have been, the Kremlin would never again deceive itself into thinking that it could deal with the East European countries as though they were satrapies. Ordering the satellite leaders about by telephone stopped after the Hungarian blood-letting. Even the vice-regal role of the Soviet ambassadors changed, though I must admit it did not change in every case. We remember well enough how, in 1968, the Soviet Ambassador in Prague acted with the arrogance of a representative of an occupying power, and in Bulgaria the role of the Soviet Ambassador is still that of a governor-general.

But my forecast for Eastern Europe would be an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary loosening of the links with Moscow. The Soviet leaders now realise, even if they cannot say so loud and clear, that the national factor is much more decisive within the socialist camp than the ideological "proletarian" factor, and will make concessions to it in order to keep the lid on the Empire. Indeed, they seem to be hoping that *glasnost* and *perestroika* will offer the satellites the kind of Europeanised up-to-date model of "socialism" that the Prague reformers had on offer in 1968—but in the wrong place and at the wrong time.

—If so, their hopes may well prove to be unfounded. Learning from the Soviet model—even a "liberalising" Soviet model—runs into deep cultural and historical resistance in most of East and Central Europe. It is, of course, quite possible that the spirit of "Gorbachovism" will be used as a handy stick to beat the East European governments with (it is already being so used by the Hungarian writers); but only as a means to an end, and that end is national independence or, shall we say, maximum national independence compatible with Eastern Europe's geopolitical position. The fact is that public sentiment rejects any variety of Communist rule. I remember how the brief flowering of "Eurocommunism" in the mid-1970s had virtually no national impact (although it boosted the morale of dissidents within the Party and of some ex-Party members).[4]

DJILAS: There are, nevertheless, straws in the wind—and they are no more than that—that betray movement in the Soviet Union on a broader front than perhaps any of us expected; and this will have its repercussions in Eastern Europe. For example, the Belgrade magazine *NIN* recently published an interview with a Soviet person who uttered so harsh a critique of the shortcomings of the system that no Western Sovietologist could have done better. One of the solutions he offered—and offered in a context that made it clear that the idea was being quietly discussed in Moscow—was the replacement of the Communist party by *two* communist (or, as he called them, "socialist") parties. The one-party system was a failure, he said; there was a need for some form of an opposition. A second "socialist" party would supply the feedback, or words to that effect.

I don't have to add that a two-party system would fly in the face of everything that goes by the name of "socialism" in the Soviet Union and would deal a body-blow to Leninism. Two-party socialism is probably no more than a thought floated, under the cover of "openness", by a few individuals. Nevertheless, it is a sign of the sort of forces Gorbachov is releasing within his own Party.

THAT THE QUESTION *of softening, if not directly breaking, the monopoly of the Communist Party may now be on the agenda of Soviet thinking can be inferred from one of Gorbachov's own observations. Speaking to representatives of the media (on 14 July 1987), he felt it necessary to defend the leading role of the Party. Why defend it, if it is not under attack? No one, he said, should run away with the idea that*

> **". . . it is possible to get by without the Party. . . . If anyone thinks otherwise he is, at the least, mistaken. . . . Social demagogues have found their way into some editorial offices. . . . They are being particularly vicious in their attacks on cadres."**

Only a few weeks earlier (23 May 1987) Georgi Arbatov was asked, in the course of a Soviet-American telebridge programme, whether the system could be widened under Gorbachov into a multi-party system, and this is what he said:

> **"Our historical development has been such that we have one party. Actually, at the beginning of the Revolution**

[4] See G. R. Urban (ed.), *Eurocommunism* (London, 1978).

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there was not one party but there were two, and even a faction of a third party, I think—the internationalist Mensheviks. Then they withdrew from the coalition of their own accord and a one-party system was formed. . . . One can imagine in principle a system with the same property base and the same social relations as ours with not one party, but two, three or four. That is possible in principle and in theory. We have had debates about this and, in effect, have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in it that would contradict the system itself. . . ."

An even more intriguing account of how the one-party system came into being in the USSR was given by the Novosti *spokesman, Rozental, in response to a request by journalists to fill in the "blank spots of history".*

"The one-party system in the USSR is the result of the rejection by the leaders of the parties of Russian petty-bourgeois democracy, which formed part of the Petrograd Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies, of the proposal of the Bolsheviks that a multi-party Soviet government be formed. The Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, the Popular Socialists and others came out openly against Soviet rule, unleashing a bloody civil war in conjunction with the bourgeoisie. . . . The West may, to a certain extent, regard itself as a co-author of our single party system."[5]

DJILAS: Arbatov was, shall we say, economising with the truth and speaking to gullible Americans who don't know their Soviet history. But it is certainly of some significance that he should have defended, at least in principle, the anti-Leninist idea of a multi-party system. The influential L. I. Abalkin raised it as well at the 19th Party Congress:

"Are we capable of ensuring the democratic organisation of public life, while preserving the Soviet organisation of society and the one-party system? Yes or no?"

—If the question of what precisely the Party is for and how it should fit into "democratisation" is now beginning to surface, Gorbachov himself is responsible for planting it. It was he who said in 1986 that, since under Soviet socialism "feedback" could not reach the decision-makers through an Opposition, the Party itself would have to generate the criticisms and supply the feedback. This may well have been the idea that encouraged more sanguine spirits to talk about a two-party "socialism". But, in his formal pronouncements, Gorbachov has certainly given no encouragement to the multi-party reformers. At the 19th Party Conference he observed:

"Recently, we have seen attempts to use democratic rights in the pursuit of anti-democratic aims. Some people seem to think that in this manner we can solve all our problems, from opening up our borders to the creation of opposition parties. The Central Committee of the CPSU believes that such abuses of democratisation are in total contradiction to the aims of *perestroika* and go against the interests of the people."

[5] Moscow briefing of the *Novosti* press agency (25 February 1988).

DJILAS: The fact that a discussion of this formerly forbidden topic is taking place in the Soviet Union at all is an indication of the way the wind is blowing—and that wind is being carefully monitored by those sensitive minds in Budapest, Warsaw and Prague who seem to miss nothing.

So they must also have monitored the disappearance of "*partinost*" from Yugoslav culture. One of the most encouraging things about the Yugoslav model of "socialism" is the return of culture to some semblance of normality. It is there that the satellite parties and the Gorbachov reformers could learn a thing or two to the benefit of Russian and East European cultures—and, come to think of it, to the benefit of the Communist movement itself.

Yugoslav culture is now as good as conducted *outside* the framework of the official ideology. Even in Croatia, where the Party is more orthodox than in most of the other Republics, literary culture is divorced from the Party. In Belgrade, no self-respecting author would toe the Party line. Writers who joined the Party out of a sense of careerism write *away* from the tenets of official thinking and would be deeply offended if anyone suggested that they were "constructing socialism". Even in Bosnia, where the authorities carry in their baggage a heavy ballast of Stalinism, and punishment is still meted out for "thought-crime" (political gossip and the the like), culture has become a strictly non-Party affair.

The most important aspect of this relative cultural freedom is the liberty of our historians to write more or less objective history. There remain subjects that are delicately avoided —one does not attack Tito or the Communist Revolution in general terms—but the rest of history, including Party history, has now become the sort of craft any respectable historian in the West would recognise as normal. Of course, Yugoslav historians offer wildly different and conflicting interpretations and are frequently at each other's throats. Surely, however, that is quite normal among historians and indeed a sign of the vitality of historiography.

WE MENTIONED that some of the more sanguine spirits in Moscow may have taken Gorbachov's 1986 call for a better feedback within the Party to be a call for the dilution of the authority of the Party or even a call for an "opposition".

DJILAS: They didn't have to be all that sanguine, though, since Gorbachov has given hostages to fortune. Note the sort of words he *avoids* using. There is nothing in his speeches about a classless society—about the advent of Communism, or even "advanced socialism" (which was dogma under Brezhnev)—about the Soviet Union overtaking the US in per-capita production—or any of the other promises that were made in Khrushchev's programme in 1961.

—There is a certain lack of passion in his speeches when he touches on the leading role of the Party; a difference of key from the one used by Ligachev, for example. In his talk to media-men (in July 1987), he used the curious phrase "the Party must not lag behind the processes going on in society".

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DJILAS: Precisely. At the January 1987 plenum, Gorbachov made a remarkable observation: "The life of the working collectives is unimaginable without the Party, the trade unions, the Komsomol, and other social organisations. . . ." This puts the Party on a par with the Komsomols and trade unions. In most cases he does insist on the leading role of the Party, though he tends to drop his predecessors' claim that Soviet society is homogeneous. At both the January and June 1987 plenums he argued: It is true that antagonistic contradictions have ceased to exist in Soviet society, but eliminating them does not mean "levelling them out".

For me, this is an important admission. For it expresses the recognition that conflicts stemming from group interests, collective interests, departmental interests and Party interests exist—and that they have *stratified* society. It follows that these interests must be given expression, and that implies the quiet entry of pluralism.

In almost all of Gorbachov's articulations there are hints or statements that "parasitic" groups within the *nomenklatura* are responsible for the present state of the Soviet economy. . . .

—a certain Milovan Djilas wrote a book along those lines thirty-odd years ago. . . .

DJILAS: Yes, in *The New Class* I anticipated most of Gorbachov's current findings. But even before that, in 1953, I wrote an article in *Borba* in which I argued: Of course, a single party cannot secure socialism and democracy, but even a homogeneous, single-class society couldn't do it. Conflicting interests would remain. Freedom and democracy would *not* be safe under the rule of the working class. That ended my political career; in January 1954 I was expelled from the Central Committee.

I find it, also, intriguing that Gorbachov should now want to vest power in *non*-Party cadres. Here again, we anticipated Gorbachov by well over 30 years. In 1952-53 some of us—for a time, Tito himself—felt that the leading role of the Party should be cut back and non-Party people given more influence. I personally urged that the power of the Party should be reduced—so did Kardelj and Bakaric. Tito, however, having looked at the idea, could sense the approaching dangers of a post-Stalin thaw and finally disagreed.

—What was his argument?

DJILAS: He was jealous of his personal power which he had wielded without opposition during and since the War. He told us that the long-term success of the Revolution required a strong man, that in the Soviet system the leading role of the Party was absolute and that without it Communism would disintegrate.

—In Hungary Kádár did give a more emphatic role to non-party people some years ago, yet the system has not disintegrated nor did his personal power suffer. His "retirement" in March 1988 can certainly not be ascribed to the influence of the non-Party elements. Do you think these things are yet to come in Hungary and, perhaps, eventually in the Soviet Union too?

DJILAS: I would hesitate to predict. Certainly, Gorbachov's new deal represents the terminal phase of the Stalinist model of Communism—and, we may safely say, of the *Soviet* model of Communism—for, apart from a few years in the 1920s, there has been no other. That doesn't automatically mean the end of dogmatism and Leninism. In Yugoslavia and Hungary the Stalinist model has been dead for some time, yet the remnants of the past are alive. One-party rule and police control are, alas, in rude health.

—Your reading of the Communist system has certainly come in from the cold since those dramatic days when "The New Class" was written behind bars. . . .

DJILAS: I finished writing *The New Class* on the eve of my imprisonment for what I had said about the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. I was myself responsible for sending the first part of the book abroad, courtesy of a foreign journalist. The second part was first hidden by my wife Stephanie, and then smuggled out through the same channel some days after I had started my term in prison. It is poignant to remember those conditions, sitting as we are in your study in Brighton 30 years on.

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE *between Milovan Djilas and Mikhail Gorbachov is that Djilas followed his analysis of the Communist system to its logical conclusion and says "No socialism"—whereas Gorbachov's slogan is "More socialism". It will be interesting to see whether Gorbachov will still say "More socialism" five years from now and what he will mean by "More socialism"—if he hasn't "restructured" himself out of the leadership in the meantime.*

"The anti-Party group led by M. S. Gorbachov. . . ." *Can you see those words appearing in some future statement of the Central Committee?*

DJILAS: Nothing is impossible under Soviet rule; but so radical a "restoration" is, in my opinion, not on the cards. Political systems are not in the habit of committing suicide. In any case, Gorbachov, unlike Brezhnev, strikes me as a true believer. . . .

—so was Milovan Djilas. . . .

DJILAS: . . . and I cannot see Gorbachov presiding over the liquidation of Communism. He is a man who has begun to recognise what ails the system and is trying to change an Absolute Monarchy into a Constitutional Monarchy. In that he may succeed, and gain a good deal of credit for it. Since the 19th Party Conference, it is clear that *he* wants to be the Constitutional Monarch.

His plans for the rejuvenation of the local Soviets and for a powerful executive Presidency, with himself, undoubtedly, as President, point to a new political arrangement whereby a much reinforced State apparatus would act as a countervailing force to the Party.

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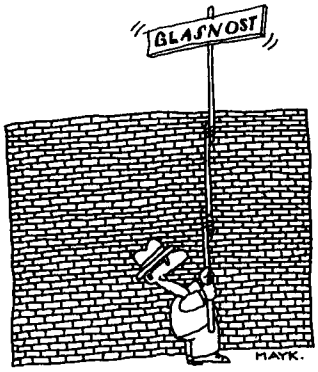
3. "Inform the People . . . Blow by Blow, Crime by Crime"



YOU SAID you recognised Gorbachov's prudence in not presenting Soviet public opinion with a spate of sudden and dramatic revelations about the Soviet past. At the same time you want to see the whole of that past laid bare. But can the Soviet system reform itself even within those narrow limits which (as you have indicated) restrict the reformability of any Communist system, without unveiling everything there is to unveil about the Soviet past? Can a new future be planned without the lessons of Soviet history being first publicly assimilated?

DJILAS: In the long run, retrieval of the Soviet past is *the* essential prerequisite of Gorbachov's programme of reconstruction. Soviet historians have frequently falsified Soviet history. They excelled, as we know, especially in representing the 1917 *putsch* against the Provisional Government and the forcible dissolution of the Constituent Assembly as "a Revolution". The full truth about the 1931-33 Collectivisation campaign, and the man-made famine resulting from it, remains to be told. So does the story of the Show Trials, the Great Terror and the rest of Stalin's despotism. The Soviet people cannot hope to understand the reality surrounding them without being told the truth about the roots of that reality. In our age of television and shortwave broadcasting, the true history of the Soviet system can no longer be hidden from the people. The question is only whether they get it in dribs and drabs, with a periodic shock accompanying each revelation, or whether they are given the full story and let the blame fall where it will. Soviet history must be rewritten from Day One—rewritten, that is, with complete intellectual integrity.

Calls for the reassessment of the Stalinist record are now made openly by Soviet historians such as Alexander Samsonov—and opposed by others, Isaak Mints, for example. Yury Afanasiev, writing in *Sovietskaya Kultura*, urges the authorities to permit "a full reassessment of Stalin's repressive rule", pleading that the suppression of historical facts deprives people of self-respect and spiritual strength. He argues that it is not enough to brush aside Stalin's terror as a "mistake" or a "personal shortcoming" as Soviet historians are inclined to.

These are significant developments, especially as they are accompanied by calls for the reassessment of the Khrushchev era too, which will have a direct bearing on Gorbachov's own. Fyodor Burlatsky's formidable essay on Khrushchev (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 24 February 1988[6]) and Arkadiy Vaksberg's merciless critique of Andrei Vishinsky (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 27 January 1988) are pointers of great importance.

—There are a great many skeletons in the Soviet cupboard. Gorbachov is aware of this. I don't think he is against letting those skeletons haunt some of the living, but he seems to be anxious not to allow the soul-searching to turn into a night of long knives. His dilemma is neatly encapsulated in two antithetical articles which appeared, ironically, on the same day last summer (23 July 1987) in the Soviet press.

The one in "Izvestia" criticised the "distortions of historical facts in Soviet history textbooks", and called for the compilation of "an objective history book because reforms launched in the country can be made irreversible only by people who are not afraid of telling the truth, who have their own views and are capable of upholding them. . . ." "Izvestia" then inveighed against some—not all—of the same misrepresentations of Soviet history you have just criticised:

> **"In the period following World War II, a trend towards embellishing the country's history emerged. Deleted were certain undesirable names and even many events, such as authorised abuse during the Collectivisation when peasants were forced to join farm cooperatives; famine in the 1930s; the negation of genetics and cybernetics which were proclaimed pseudo-sciences. History textbooks failed to assess Joseph Stalin objectively. . . ."**

A very different opinion was articulated in "Pravda" in the shape of a reader's letter from one Georgiy Vasylievich Matveyets:

> **"We schoolchildren took part in subbotniks at construction sites and enterprises. We witnessed the building of socialism in our country. Our hearts and minds were moulded in this atmosphere of satisfaction with our ordinary working lives. . . . All that—the Five-year Plans, Stakhanov, the success of the Collective farm peasantry, the flights of Gromoy and Chkalov, the Chelyushkin epic, the drift expedition by Papanin and his comrades, and many others—really happened, and Soviet people did it not out of fear but in conscience. People were inspired by the great idea. It mobilised them. They raced ahead. . . . It was a time when fairy-tales actually became reality. . . . That was the actual and heroic reality of Soviet people and it cannot be erased by any miscalculations, errors and even crimes on the part of one man, even though he may have worn the uniform of Generalissimo. . . . It seems to me that those who are denigrating our history in such a fashion have no sense of respect or love of their country and their people. . . ."**

Gorbachov is clearly in an unenviable position. He would, as he has often indicated, be happiest if he could harness a truthfully-told past to perestroika*; but the "social base" for that truthfully-told past doesn't exist—at least not yet. There are many people in the USSR who vested their work and honour in the Stalinist period and do not want to see that period disowned and disparaged. Ligachev is one of their spokesmen, and Nina Andreyeva's conservative manifesto,[7] "I cannot waive princi-*

[6] Published in English as "Why Khrushchev Failed" in ENCOUNTER (May 1988).

[7] *Sovietskaya Rossiya* (13 March 1988).

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ples", is as representative of their thinking as any we are likely to get.

DJILAS: It *is* a dilemma; but it is one Gorbachov will have to tackle even if he can do so only by stages. Suppose we shifted the scene of discussion to Hitler's Germany. Couldn't millions of Germans argue, in good faith, that in the 1930s they put their work and enthusiasm into changing unemployment-plagued and inflation-ridden Germany into a welfare state and a great power—and that their achievements shouldn't be denigrated because mistakes and crimes were committed by one man, Adolf Hitler?

No one in a position of responsibility would accept that sort of an argument in Germany, much less anywhere outside Germany.

I don't want to stretch my analogy too far because the two systems are not comparable. I would, nevertheless, insist that leadership and statesmanship put very special responsibilities on a reforming leader of the cut of Gorbachov. If he thinks, as he clearly does, that the Stalinist past landed the Soviet Union with burdens it can no longer support either at home or in its foreign policy, then he must pick up the threads of de-Stalinisation where Khrushchev left off, undeterred by the sort of sentiment (which I grant you may be quite widespread but no longer decisive) you have quoted from the pages of *Pravda*.

—Even General Jaruzelski has urged him in that direction, in the pages of "Kommunist", to boot. He wants the truth to be told about the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, and the question of who was responsible for Katyn is now all but openly discussed.

DJILAS: Gorbachov is a populist radical and a very un-Russian one at that. He doesn't believe in the control of the people by Authority. He thinks the population ought to and can control itself once it has been given the facts. Speaking to the workers of Zelenograd recently (29 July 1987), he said:

> "People say: control is necessary. . . . But who should do this? If we are to count on controllers, then we will have to increase that apparatus still further. We have to do it through democracy, through the people participating in everything. This is the main guarantee of control and against all outrages, for the people see everything and know everything, and won't allow them. . . ."

These are unexceptionable sentiments, even though they show a trust in popular wisdom that is not clearly warranted by history, least of all Russian history. But if wisdom resides in a free and fully-informed people, how can Gorbachov forego informing the people—blow by blow, crime by crime, lie by lie—about the long Stalinist past of which all of the Union's present troubles are the natural and inevitable consequences? It isn't enough to boast, as he did, that the Party was strong, that "we criticise ourselves as no one before has criticised us in the West or in the East. . . ." If the Party is that strong—give out the truth and nothing but the truth. We must press for this because, when the chips are down, the liberalisation of the Soviet system is more important for the world than arms control agreements with the Soviet state.

DON'T YOU THINK *Gorbachov is checking his impatience and proceeding by stages? He seems to have decided to deprive, first, the Stalinist era of its aura of heroism; and, having created a psychologically neutral land around Stalin, eventually, when he feels the time is right, to out-Khrushchev Nikita Sergeyevich by telling all. He would, then, perhaps launch a frontal attack on Stalin and link it to some move in his struggle for an uninhibited mandate.*

In so doing, he would certainly not be short of support. "In order to compensate, at least morally, for past guilt and to avoid a repetition of lawlessness in the future", the Estonian Creative Unions say in their petition,

> **". . . we consider it necessary for the Party Conference to make an assessment of Stalinist repressions as crimes directed against the Party, Soviet power and humanity. . . . Along with this it is necessary to complete and make public the rehabilitation of all the innocent victims of that period and to immortalise their memory."**[8]

DJILAS: Cautious de-Stalinisation appears to be Gorbachov's tactic. Almost every day he, and the press that represents him, keep inching forward to a full reckoning with Stalinism. His position may be summed up in these words: We never can or should forgive or justify what happened in 1937 and 1938. Those who were in power are responsible; but that does not detract from all we have today, what the Party and the people accomplished while undergoing those trials.

I can accept this as a formula of transition; and that, I believe, is what it is meant to be, but no more than a formula of transition.

—Will the apparat *stand for the final push, if indeed it comes to one? I have my doubts. V. M. Chebrikov's laudation (10 September 1987) of Felix Dzerzhinskiy to mark the 110th anniversary of Dzerzhinskiy's birth—he was celebrated as a great, humane leader—must have made Gorbachov wonder whether he and his KGB chief were marching to the same tune.*

> **"Imperialism's special services [Chebrikov said] are trying to find new loopholes through which to penetrate our society . . . with the aim of instilling in Soviet people a bourgeois understanding of democracy . . . splitting the monolithic unity of Party and people, and installing political and ideological pluralism. . . . We have people who hold ideas and views which are alien and even frankly hostile to socialism. Some of them embark on the path of committing anti-state and anti-social actions. . . . There are also those who are prepared to enter into direct cooperation with the imperialist states' special services and betray the homeland. . . ."**

Then came Chebrikov's warning:

> **"Clear awareness is needed that restructuring is taking**

[8] *Sirp ja Vasar* (8 April 1988).

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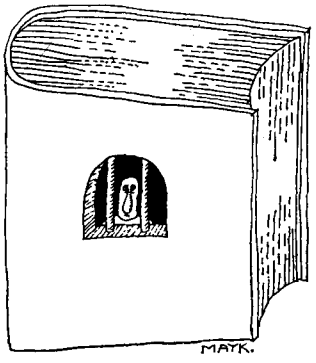
place under the leadership of the Communist Party, within the framework of socialism and in the interests of socialism. And this revolutionary process will be reliably protected against any subversive intrigues!"

DJILAS: Well, this is a tough warning, especially as the speech appeared in *Pravda* under the ominous headline "ASPECTS THAT MAKE HIM [Dzerzhinskiy] OUR CONTEMPORARY". Chebrikov might as well have said "Aspects That Make Stalin our Contemporary".

The strange thing is that Chebrikov, as we heard from Ligachev at the 19th Party Conference, was (together with Gromyko and Solomentsev) one of that small group of Politburo members who helped Gorbachov into the saddle at the the March 1985 Plenum of the Central Committee. Has Chebrikov changed? Has Gorbachov? Or is there some compact between reformers and conservatives that we cannot yet fathom?

Whether the *apparat* would stand for the final push, if indeed it came to one, remains to be seen. If Gorbachov's power base elsewhere in the state is strong enough, if he can provide more food and consumer goods, and if the *apparat*'s personal interests are not dramatically affected, it might . . . but then it might not. The counter-attack encapsulated in Nina Andreyeva's manifesto is a signal he dare not ignore.

4. Gorbachov, a Djilas Disciple?



YOU HAVE SAID that Yugoslav historiography has become fairly independent and reliable. Does that reliability extend to its treatment of yourself?

DJILAS: Yes, it's beginning to. When they write about me in various papers and magazines, they quote from my speeches in 1949 or 1951 and publish the photographs that go with them. The quotations are correct and the comments neutral.

—For example?

DJILAS: Well, they might say that on such-and-such a day the Central Committee discussed higher education and Milovan Djilas said this or that. They neither embellish the official record nor distort what I said.

—But you are far from being "rehabilitated"?

DJILAS: Under the present régime, I'll never be rehabilitated on the political level. You saw the Yugoslav Prime Minister's attack on me in *Spiegel* (23 March 1987). He called me "a traitor *par excellence*". That does not quite herald rehabilitation. In the press, however, I have been to some extent *morally* rehabilitated—as a former leading Communist who had a certain part to play and was, shall we say, no worse than the others. That's the line they take on me.

—It is not quite clear to me why, given the Gorbachov factor in the Communist world, you should not be rehabilitated on the political level as well.

DJILAS: Well, I am negotiating with certain Yugoslav publishing houses, and there is a vague possibility that my memoirs, entitled *Wartime* (which appeared in the USA and elsewhere some years ago and attracted much comment) will eventually be published in Yugoslavia. One historian who enjoys the confidence of the present leadership ventured the opinion, after some hesitation, that the book is not hostile to the Revolution, is rather well written, and offers an important testimony. If the book is published, I will feel that my "moral rehabilitation" as an author, not as a politician, will have been accomplished.

I do not, as I say, expect political rehabilitation because that would imply an admission on the part of the authorities that I had been right all along, and that might, in their view, reopen the road to my ideas.

—But the plain fact is that you were substantially right in almost everything you wrote. You were the first to expose the "New Class", the corrupting influence of privilege, the gap between words and deeds in Communist practice, the lack of democracy in socialist society, the falsification of history, and so on. Perhaps you had the misfortune of being right before your time, but that should not be counted against you after three decades.

DJILAS: I'd be the last to disagree. It would be false modesty on my part to deny that the present "Thaw" in the Soviet Union does give me some satisfaction. But, in the political world, being right is a long way from meaning that you will receive justice.

—Let me be quite open about this. Does the régime fear that you might, if you were fully rehabilitated, make a bid for power?

DJILAS: No, the régime is not afraid of that. It is just worried that my rehabilitation would cause turbulence in the Party. I have never been a threat to the political power of the Party—but I *have* been a force of opposition in ideology and could perhaps become one again. And as ideology is what justifies the existence of the Party and supplies its vocabulary, this danger is something the leadership dare not discount.

—Would you like to be in power again?

DJILAS: Every man of ideas would like to see his own put into practice. I have, from time to time, been led by a similar desire. I would have liked my ideas to have some influence because I believed they were right. But I was never *hungry* for power, and I am certainly not anxious to have any power now.

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—Certainly your portrayal of Tito in your biography[9] cannot be prejudicial to your political rehabilitation—since you paint a picture of him that is surprisingly favourable and even reverential. You depict him as a Communist of absolute dedication and a man of vision and integrity. No one can accuse you, after Tito's death and thus without danger to yourself, of taking your revenge on him by remembering him unkindly.

DJILAS: Well, you will probably be surprised to hear that some of the Belgrade opposition thought my book was far too friendly to Tito. "You were unduly fair to him", they told me. "He was a lot worse than you have shown him to be." I do not accept that view. I described Tito as correctly as it was in my power to do so. I tried to dispel delusions but I also recognised the great qualities of the man.

—It crossed my mind as I was reading that book that you were, perhaps, lifting Tito on to a higher plane of history than he deserves to be on in the eyes of disinterested historians—because by lifting him you were also upgrading your own stature. This may sound unkind, but isn't it an inclination we all have? If you show a fellow writer or politician, with whom you had good or even bad relations, to have been a significant man, you are automatically showing yourself to be of his order of importance. You and Tito may have had your differences but —so the reader is given to understand—those differences were the differences of great men and of historical importance. Did this kind of consideration play a part?

DJILAS: It was certainly not a conscious consideration. Perhaps subconsciously it may have coloured some of my writings. But I flatter myself that my place as an intellectual is separate and independent from Tito. Not that I was politically as important as some Western commentators have tried to make out. I was not groomed to be Tito's successor. In the hierarchy of the Yugoslav leadership I was probably in fourth place—after Kardelj and Rankovic, although I am vain enough to believe that I was a better writer than Kardelj, and more original as an ideological thinker. But in terms of power politics I was merely number four, and I never thought of myself as the pretender. At the same time, to the end of Tito's days, I sustained certain basic sympathies for him as a Yugoslav revolutionary-leader and human being. This is probably the source of your impression that Tito comes out better in my book than his critics—and some of my friends—would have liked and expected.

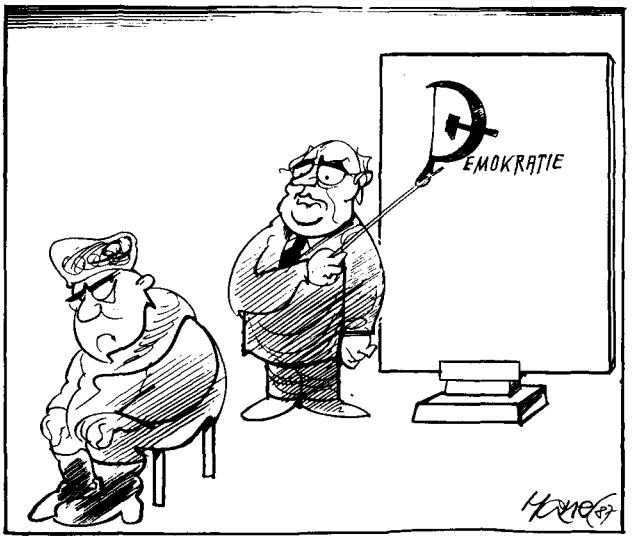
BUT YOU WERE, *to my mind at least, the keeper of the purity (if that is the right word) of the Revolution. You were a fanatical Communist when you felt the old Order and the new Invader had to be fought. You were suspicious of Stalin when he began to encroach upon Yugoslav independence. You became increasingly critical of your fellow Communists in power when you discovered that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" corrupts just as any other dictatorship. And when the cup was full, you declared that the Revolution had become a fraud, and that Communism could answer none of the world's really pressing problems.*

So, whatever your official or unofficial place may have been in the Yugoslav leadership's pecking order, you do, in history, stand next to Tito as a kind of counter-Tito-of-the-Yugoslav-Communist-conscience—a heretic who may have saved the faith (at least to his own satisfaction) while consigning a corrupt church to the flames. That is, perhaps, too metaphorical a way of putting it. But it leads me to ask you whether you do, nowadays, look upon yourself as a heretic of the Revolution?

DJILAS: A revolution is always a tragedy in human affairs. I don't like to romanticise it, and dislike intensely people who do. The Yugoslav Revolution, too, was a great evil—although it would be erroneous to say that it could have been avoided. Our Revolution did resolve certain problems we inherited from Royal Yugoslavia, but it didn't satisfy the aspirations of the revolutionaries. Revolutions never do. There can be no greater insult to my conscience and intelligence than to be told that the "socialist" revolution was a "humanitarian" event that "changed the course of history". There are no such sudden watersheds in history; and I cannot quite see how enormous blood-lettings and sufferings can be termed humanitarian even in the embellishing light of retrospect. Yet, from time to time, revolutions are inevitable because the guilt and corruption of certain ruling classes seem to be an ineradicable feature of human history.

I was, as you rightly say, a fully believing Communist. Communism for me was not just a social policy, not a means for manipulating people, not a stepping stone to advancement, not a way of acquiring and exercising power, but a deep, personal, moral commitment as strong as religion.

Only a true believer has the right to rise up against his own convictions and reject them at the risk of being damned as a renegade or a heretic. When I reject revolution and the dictatorship that follows it as great misfortunes, I speak as a man who believed in revolution fervently, but has learned from bitter experience and long reflection that while revolutions may be pleasing to the temper of revolutionaries, they



[9] *Tito: The Story from the Inside* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981).

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achieve virtually nothing. That does not mean to say that revolution is not justified when enormous injustices pervade the lives of men and every peaceful means of putting them right has been exhausted. They must, however, be the last resort.

If you now describe me as the keeper of the conscience of the Yugoslav Revolution, a through-and-through heretic who rejects Revolution—that's an identification I accept without demur.

—Looking back on your life at the age of 76, do you feel that you lost something vital when you lost power in 1953? Or did your writings compensate for that loss?

DJILAS: They did, and they did more than compensate because they were, and are, much closer to my real self than the exercise of power. If you said to me: "Choose between being the leader of Yugoslavia and writing books", my answer would be: "If I knew that I could do something essential for the freedom and prosperity of the people of Yugoslavia, I would choose to be the leader." But if you asked me: "Choose between being a leader *under Tito* and pursuing your vocation as a writer", I would choose writing without hesitation.

—Would it be because writing itself is a form of power, or because writing gives you so much satisfaction?

DJILAS: It is more the latter. I am, as you know, not only a political writer. I am a belletrist as well. Circumstances pushed me into politics; but power has no attractions for me, least of all the day-to-day exercise of power. The repercussions of whatever power and influence I had were severe when my spell in power ended. But the lion's share of the suffering was borne not by myself, even though I was twice sent to prison, but by my family and relatives. I had, after all, freely chosen to do what I did, but my dependents had not. My wife Stephanie and my son Aleksa were the real victims. My wife was a young and strong woman, and she could cope. But my son Aleksa was only about four when I was first sent to prison, and about nine when my second term came. For a small boy it is an immense shock to have a father in prison. Boys heroise their fathers. To see a father behind bars and humiliated is, I feel, the worse thing that can happen to a child.

—An inscription you were kind enough to write for me in a copy of your book, "Rise and Fall",[10] *says:* **". . . as further evidence that my 'fall' was more 'glorious' than my 'rise'. . . ."** *Should I read this as a summing up of your career?*

DJILAS: Those who are seen by the world and the church to which they once belonged as heretics, usually get better billing in history than those who are not. In that sense my "fall" was more "glorious" than my "rise". But I also meant that dedication to be read by you as a bit of a personal message because you have, in the course of our many conversations over the years, witnessed my "fall" and given it a dimension I have found new and challenging.[11]

—I said earlier that you were a keeper of the purity of the Revolution. Can I change my metaphor and say that you were in many ways a Philosopher who became King (even though you were only a Viceroy to Tito)? You found yourself in a position where you could, as a Communist intellectual, put many of your ideas into action because you had a good deal of power.

DJILAS: No, Tito alone was King; but he was King with a vengeance.

—Weren't you in reality Tito's mentor? When your teaching was abused, the philosopher's "love of wisdom" induced you to part company with your charge. You discovered that your monarch wasn't true to his Kingdom. . . .

DJILAS: No, I was not a philosopher even in the weakest sense of the word; but I did see the emperor without his uniform, without his crown, and without his decorations; and that was sobering.

The most I would say is that I was a thinker in Tito's court, yet one without pretensions. My ambition was, and still is, to put pen to paper and have some impact through the written page on my nation's destiny. There isn't a single Serb writer who has not sought to involve himself in shaping the future of his people; I am no exception. To be so involved is probably characteristic of the intelligentsia of all small nations. But it is especially true of those nations that arrived late on the stage of history or are in danger of extinction. You could observe the same trend in Poland and Hungary both in the 19th century and nowadays. The realisation that your nation may be on the brink of disaster focuses the minds of its intellectuals wonderfully on the one thing that really matters—survival.

YOU NOW CLEARLY POINT *to "the Nation" as the focus of your loyalties. Isn't this slightly at odds with the support you gave "Eurocommunism" in the 1970s, and with your tacit approval of the Gorbachov round of reforms?*

DJILAS: Not at all. Anything that dilutes a generically bad political system must be welcome. Anything that lessens the impact of a disease is still a great step forward for those suffering from it.

—But aren't "Eurocommunism" and "Gorbachovism" likely to help those on the European and American Left who have always argued that there is nothing basically wrong with the Soviet system? Take away the accretions and distortions, they claim, and "socialism" will stand out once again as the way forward.

DJILAS: There are precious few left who would subscribe to that misguided idealism. The Soviet system has become an

[10] Milovan Djilas, *Rise and Fall* (Macmillan, 1985).

[11] See George Urban, "A Conversation with Milovan Djilas", ENCOUNTER (December 1979) and in *Stalinism* (London, 1982).

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anti-model. Even 70 years of ceaseless Gorbachovism would not improve it to a point where it could *begin* to compare with the life-chances and freedoms offered by the liberal democracies. Only fools and scoundrels could be tempted.

So let me say it again without rehearsing my arguments: Communism as culled from Marx and abused by Lenin is totally unsound. It is ill-conceived in principle and does not work. You can alleviate some of its wrongs and patch up some of its defects, but you cannot turn it into an acceptable system. We can say all this without denying that Marx was a great historical figure and an original thinker in some areas. I reread his *Kapital* for the last time towards the end of my spell in office in the spring of 1950. Our problem then was to find a way out of Stalinism. I found *Kapital* a most relevant piece of writing. In Volume II, I hit upon the idea of self-management and informed my comrades and Tito. Tito would, however, not immediately accept it, despite the respectability of the source.

—Why wouldn't he?

DJILAS: Initially, he just didn't understand what I had in mind. Self-management was outside the standard Communist experience and there was no sanction or model for it. However, being a practical and intelligent man he eventually understood that this might turn out to be a good idea. It didn't. But the two points I am making are: first, that Marx equipped us in our search for unorthodox economic solutions with a practical idea that the Soviets are only now beginning to embrace (having rejected it as "treason" when it was first launched in Belgrade); and, second, that Tito was good at using other people's ideas but poor in generating original ones of his own. In this he was like Stalin. Even the concept of building "socialism in one country" was Bukharin's not Stalin's (which may, incidentally, complicate or—who knows?—ease his full *political* rehabilitation).

—The need to refer to the sacred books was a real one even within the small circle of the top leadership?

DJILAS: It was. The question of presentation was crucial. In offering self-management to the public and the world, it was important that we should have canonical sanction for striking out in this new direction. Of course, you and I realise that every heresy has to stick to the revealed texts while actually giving them unorthodox meaning. With Marx we didn't even have to do that, because Marx contains so much that is ambiguous or genuinely "anti-Communist" (in the Stalinist interpretation of Communism) that we could conveniently help ourselves to whatever served our purpose.

—A device Gorbachov has not, as yet, made use of but one he is surely familiar with. At the moment his reforms are all wrapped in Leninism, in which he steers a similarly selective course; but who knows what the future may hold. If he wants to dilute the primacy of the Party, for example, he may very well go back to Marx and argue that the idea of a Communist party is rejected in the "Communist Manifesto", and he may exploit many other loopholes and ambiguities in Marx to liberalise the system without erring from the original revelation.

DJILAS: Eventually, he might. Whether he could get away with it is another matter.

—What exactly did Tito say when you first put the idea of self-management to him?

DJILAS: Tito's first reaction was, as I said, negative. He felt the workers in Yugoslavia were too uneducated to run a self-managing economy. But when Kardelj, Kidric and I explained that self-management might solve some of our worst problems and offer a model to others, he quickly understood and said "Well, let's do it: we can advance it under the slogan '*All factories to the Workers!*'. . ."

Initially, self-management did show certain successes. It opened our economy to the market, and gave us a weapon against Stalinism and the abuses of the bureaucracy. After a short time, however, it came unstuck for the reasons we have already discussed and is now the source of my country's present round of misfortunes. In short: self-management without a free-market economy, and that without political pluralism cannot be made to work. It is one auxiliary utopia among many that Communists resort to when practical life repudiates the principal utopia of Communism itself.

WOULDN'T YOU SAY *that after his (March 1988) visit to Yugoslavia, Gorbachov might, nevertheless, go down that utopian road? He admired Yugoslavia's relative plenty, the well-stocked shops, and the absence of queues.*

DJILAS: Compared to the economic situation in the Soviet Union, especially as far as consumer durables and food are concerned, Yugoslavia is, of course, a veritable paradise. But Gorbachov would be gravely mistaken if he mistook our auxiliary utopia for a solution. We have what we have because we are parasites, in one way or another, on the really free-market economies and parliamentary democracies of the West. Such political and economic "successes" as we have had cannot be measured in terms of developing the unused resources of "socialism" (as Gorbachov is in the habit of saying), but only in terms of repudiating socialism in fact, if not in language.

—The dominant Western conception of socialism appears to concern itself no longer with "property relations" and the "ownership of the means of production" but, rather, with equity and political decision-making. Would you agree with that change of emphasis?

DJILAS: I would indeed; it is not merely a change of emphasis but a reconceptualisation of socialism. The need for that reconceptualisation within the Soviet system is what Gorbachov's visit to Yugoslavia should have brought home to him.

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James Lasdun

The Jump

A FAMILIAR NAME appeared on the screen, above a little American flag. The figure in goggles and ski hat, crouching at the top of the jump slope, could of course be anybody. Nevertheless, Victoria peered forward, wondering whether she might glimpse some recognisable feature among the phosphorescent colours framed in her old television.

The figure launched himself onto the steep slope, driving his poles into the snow with big, gleeful, muscular stabs. His name still hung above him as he plunged towards the lip of the jump, and Victoria had a distinct memory of seeing it in a similar square-angled computer print at the top of a series of papers on Greek literature. Was this the same Carl Pepperall? His face was too masked, his body too crouched, for her to tell. She turned the volume knob, but the commentator must have fallen silent for the build-up to the jump. The figure gathered speed through the rush of static. A different camera showed him in profile slicing across the screen, and for the first time Victoria felt less than amused by the blotting paper definition of her set. Could it be him? He hurtled down towards the lip, and with a final convulsion of his doubled-up body, took off into the lurid blue sky. But instead of turning into a sleek missile of compacted limbs and skis, he seemed to trip over some invisible rift in the air, and open out into an ungainly assemblage of flailing, wheeling spindles that tumbled through the sky like an enormous daddy-long-legs.

Victoria watched askance as the man crashed to the ground and lay there in a heap, abruptly motionless, the unnatural colours of his ski clothes bleeding into the snow around him.

The commentator started to speak again, but Victoria lunged forward and turned off the television, wishing she had done so before the sports coverage had begun, though glad at least to have been quick enough to protect herself from a knowledge she did not wish to possess.

She took up her work again, and edged herself back into the mood of delicate scorn with which she had been reviewing her old professor's latest offering on Epicharmus (how invigoratingly difficult it was to have a reputation for an unflinching critical eye!). The words flowed easily until, like a sudden *whump*! of oxygen into a smouldering fire, a glimpse of something vast, shadowy, and unnameable opened up in her.

The year before, Victoria had taken a teaching job at the small college of Branderhaven, in eastern Connecticut. From her classroom she could see across the campus to a buttressed gothic fantasy that had been built to house what the prospectus described as a gym of unrivalled sophistication. It would already be full of students when she arrived to teach her morning class, and however late she left at night, there would still be dozens of young men and women exercising on the mysterious contraptions gleaming in the golden interior light.

Occasionally they make a sortie, she had written to her colleagues back in London, *for a lecture or seminar, but reluctantly, and you feel a little cruel dragging them away, even though it looks like a Bosch hell in there.* Mens Sana *indeed. The faculty are the same. Not for them the salt of bracing interdisciplinary debate as seasoning to their (epicurean!) lunches; no, any remarks that don't bear directly on the subject of fishing are considered practically scandalous. My contributions are lavish, as you can imagine. Do you remember Chester Platkin, the "corn-fed Oklahoman"? The men are all like him, though the head of Humanities—a Hadley or Bradley—does show minute signs of life. He has offered to escort me around New York. No flowers please.*

A HARD BLUE LIGHT was at work on the city; chiselling and bevelling angles, glazing planes. The cold sky looked packed with cut crystal. The place produced its customary effect on this latest initiate:

"It's like being inside a diamond", Victoria announced. They passed a luminous violet tanning parlour, a shop selling the flowering parts of tropical plants. "No, I'll tell you exactly what it's like, it's like a mixture of London, Rome, Madrid and Venus."

The brilliance of the morning and the affability of her companion had released a surge of effusive spirits in her, and she talked as she had not done since leaving London. Her phrases grew steadily pithier and more daring.

"There's a saurian strain to everything, even the people", she informed Brad, "they seem alert to different disturbances, do you know what I mean? As if they get

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their energies from different food sources. Any second now we're going to see a coiled tongue dart out to catch a fly."

"Why, what are they eating in London these days?" Brad said, hoisting his amiably gloomy, hound-like jowls into a smile.

Victoria felt herself fuelled by his apparent pleasure. "That car—it's like a hybrid of a Mercedes and an anaconda. What on earth is it?"

"Just a Stretch Limo."

"A Stretch Limo! Even better!"

They were lunching in the West Village when Victoria, in full cry, experienced a distant pang of a kind she associated vaguely with the first suspicions of material loss—a lost wallet or set of keys. For a while the feeling hung in abeyance, unconnected with any discernible source. But its strength gathered until it made her falter mid-speech. The interruption seemed to startle Brad, and although he had shown no visible signs of inattention, he now smiled guiltily at Victoria, as if he had been caught drifting off. She resumed her flow, but in that fractional pause, her sense that she had been captivating this comfortable, weatherbeaten, armchair of a man, had already begun to cloud. When had she lost him? Had her appreciation of his city been too pert for his liking? A few days ago he had seemed like one of those miracles that arrive in your life so matter-of-factly you hardly remember the anguish, the aridity, that preceded them. The smell of his big, damp sheepskin coat had intimated such vastnesses of friendship and repose. Surely she can't have been mistaken. She could feel a shrillness in her voice. She suspected she ought to be quiet, stopped talking for a moment, but Brad said nothing, and the silence pushed them apart like a spreading pool. An ill-looking man went by the window leading a poodle with a bondage stud collar.

"Enter the age of sex by proxy", Victoria said with a little laugh.

Brad smiled, but seemed unamused. Or was she imagining things? She tried again, but all her words came out off-colour, or faintly condescending, and she wished she could shut up. But the more she felt herself grating on Brad, the more she felt it imperative to gain back his attention. As they left the restaurant, she gave a rendering of her dinner with the dean on her first night in Branderhaven, roguishly quoting the catchphrases that had been bandied about, the *hidden agendas, significant others*, "Oh, and yes Brad, *serendipitous moments*, I counted three *serendipiti*. . . ." But he wasn't to be tempted into the cosiness of a secret conspiracy, and his non-committal, barely audible response made her feel shallow and treacherous; "you mustn't think I'm being disloyal, now", but that only made it worse. . . .

All the while, however, she retained a provisional quality in these feelings. She was quite possibly imagining things; one was usually nowhere near as awful as one feared.

In a tunnel of the 14th Street IRT subway, they turned a corner and came face to face with a man defecating. The man stared at them brazenly, furiously, from the ghetto of his hood. As they passed by, Victoria began to say something—not, as it happened, anything to do with the man—but Brad silenced her unceremoniously with an abrupt, upward gesture of the back of his hand.

"I mean", he said, at once conciliatory, "I guess that doesn't require any comment."

Victoria was too crushed to explain that she had actually been about to ask him if he had ever taken a Mediterranean Antiquities Cruise.

THERE WERE TULIPS on her desk the next morning, white ones with feathery waves bred into the curl. She recognised them vaguely, but couldn't remember where from. There was no note. Brad? It seemed unlikely after the silent, humiliating train journey home last night. But there they were—white, fresh, cleansing the air about them. Perhaps Bradley was one of those men who have to insult you as a way of testing their own feelings. She smiled. She was not averse to the idea of a little combative wooing.

Her performance in class that morning was freer and lighter than usual, leavened by her secret excitement. At one point, several students spontaneously began taking notes—a sight that was always astonishing and gratifying. Even the curly-haired, track-suited Carl Pepperall, who sat at the back in a permanent foment of suppressed calisthenics, was unusually attentive. He was gazing at her with a look of shy wonder. Had his ears been opened at last to the riches of Greek verse? She asked his opinion of a Sapphic conceit. A panicky look came over him. She smiled, and asked another student. A breath of the tulip fragrance sent a flutter of delicate apprehension through her.

After the class, she made straight for the Faculty building. Ita, Brad's bun-guzzling Maltese secretary, gave her a faintly imbecile grin (a crumb on her lower lip), and asked how she'd enjoyed New York. Victoria thought she detected a trace of archness in the woman's voice, though it was hard to tell with the chomping and swallowing going on.

"It was very pleasant, thank you."

"Bradley sure enjoyed himself."

"Did he?"

"Sure!" *Shewer*; Ita bellowed it with a shower of crumbs and a rolling of eyes, as if her word had been doubted. She put a glistening finger to one of the trollish warts on her chin, tilted her head, and stared.

Victoria had attempted to make a motherly confidante of this woman, but there was something not quite decently maternal about her; some unresolved grievance or need that came out as quirky sulks or unexplained girlish giggles. She pointed at the door to Brad's office and said, with what was almost a leer,

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"he's in there now", as if Victoria's single thought had been emblazoned on her forehead.

In fact, the woman's peculiar clairvoyance so disarmed Victoria that she found herself opening Brad's door in a state of dreamy suggestibility, without even stopping to think of an excuse. Brad was lounging back with his feet on the desk, and fiddling with a quiver of small, brightly coloured feathers. He glanced up.

"Hi. What can I do for you?"

Victoria faltered. Brad began to wind thread about the feathers while she tried to think of something. His hands were absolutely steady. He did not have the air of a man who had just sent an anonymous gift of fancy tulips.

"I wanted to thank you for a lovely time yesterday." Victoria improvised at last.

He gave her an empty look.

"Oh, sure."

She stood helplessly. She felt mortified, but she couldn't bring herself to leave. She watched herself in horror as she stepped forward and touched the little posy of feathers in Brad's hand.

"Its pretty, what is it?" She said.

Then she felt something prick her, and simultaneously heard Brad roar "FLY", or seem to, making the word sound so much more like a command than an answer that she jumped back and fled from the room, smarting.

Ita avoided her eye, busying herself with a sticky finger; a look of sly, sullen amusement on her face.

FOR A FEW DAYS Victoria made efforts to find out who her anonymous admirer was. Men who were courteous enough to sit next to her at lunch, or say hello to her in the Faculty building, found themselves at the receiving ends of alarmingly piercing looks, that in no time had them retreating into the iciest of professional formalities.

A whisper of quiet panic began to greet her wherever she went. She was too shrewd not to notice the rout—the contortions of evasive behaviour; eyes beseeching rescue, mid-sentence flights for forgotten books, the quick getaways made under cover of a dazzling smile. . . .

She realised she had better get a grip on herself. *Anyone would think I came here to get a husband*, she wrote to her old colleagues, and she resolved to cut a figure of dignified aloofness in the remaining months of her appointment. She dropped her investigation, and in a mood of combined pique and defiance, withdrew from Branderhaven's small social arena. *If they choose to see me as an academic gastarbeiter imported from a nation fallen on hard times, then far be it for me to embarrass them with social obligations. I shall henceforth conduct myself with the meekness of a governess in a Victorian novel.* . . .

She applied herself to her classes with added diligence, spending long hours preparing intricate summaries and appraisals, going through the students' papers with an attention vastly out of proportion to anything that had gone into their making. She ate lunch at a table on her own unless she was specifically invited to join the others, which happened seldom, then not at all. And at night she retired early, proudly, with a Sanskrit primer.

The magnolia flowered hard and bright all over the campus. A week later it fell and the ground was covered with drifts of rotting blossoms. An early summer brought out the class in silks and pastels. Music came on the breeze from the steps of the gym where the students gathered in the warm, lengthening evenings. Victoria watched them as she worked at her desk. They strolled out of the big glass doors in loose tunics and togas, a little more glowing flesh on show every night. *It's the baths of Caracalla over there*, Victoria wrote, *we'll soon be down to thongs and loincloths*. . . .

Bradley receded into the background. There remained something silently contemptuous about his presence whenever it encroached on her horizon, but he was not difficult to avoid. She seldom throught of the white tulips now, remembering them merely as an irritatingly mysterious interruption of her life's natural medium, like a blizzard in a desert. Stoicism and work were to form her continuity. She pledged herself to them with a fierceness that was intended to purge every other inclination from her heart.

One evening she was making notes for a class on Greek metrics, when her concentration—usually excellent—began to stray, and would not be brought to heel. She had long ago discovered the flagellant's secret of control, which is to make things harder when they are hard, rather than easier. She turned from the notes to the more arduous task of memorising another passage of Homer (she had resolved to learn the *Odyssey* by heart before her thirty-fifth birthday). And when that didn't work, she pulled a newspaper from her bag, picked a column at random, and began translating it into Greek, an exercise she relished for its sublime purity of purpose.

She had worked herself into a cold blaze of effort searching the ancient language for epithets that would do justice to a modern fashion article (in what terms would they have conceived of da-glo and mohair, of jump suits, boiler suits and distressed leather?) when the door opened, and the bare-footed figure of Carl Pepperall appeared inside the classroom.

He looked at her silently for a moment. He seemed very far away, obscured in a tissue of soft sounds and night scents that had trailed in with him, and then further removed by an after-swirl of dictionary print milling before her eyes like a gnat cloud. She heard him speak—"Oh, excuse me ma'am"—and had the odd impression of seeing his lips move out of time with his words. "I think I left my sneakers in here." He rummaged for them under a table, stood up, and grinned at her. She found herself hoping he would go now. She

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was aware of him peering at her, and of herself sitting there without speaking or moving. She must have been straining her eyes. The room looked very dark, and everything in it seemed to pulse. Light dissolved from the boy as if he were a body of light steeped in dark water. There was a long pause.

"Are you all right ma'am?" she heard him say. The words seemed spoken in a foreign tongue. He was approaching, a look of concern on his face. She had an urge to hide the work she was doing, but her limbs felt too heavy to move. He stood by her, looking down at the desk. Her forehead tingled coldly, as if at the onset of fear.

"You're translating the *Times* into Greek", he said. "Why are you doing that?"

She could hardly look at him, let alone answer his question. Her head was bowed in shame. After a moment's silence he gave an unexpectedly assured chuckle. "Why don't you take a break?" he said, "come over to the gym."

SHE WAS ON A WALKWAY above an echoing, cathedral-like space, lit so brilliantly she was at first aware only of a multitudinous gleam of chrome and glass and polished wood. She had been led there in what amounted to a state of suspended volition. Protests and practicalities had crumbled in the face of Carl's polite, confident insistence (where had he got that sudden flow of confidence from—her own ebb? Some power source unknown to her?). Her glimpses through the window of the gym had not prepared her for the size of the interior. She remembered her arrival in New York. Here was the same dazzle, the same power of pure scale: a broad central aisle given over to game after game of basket-ball and tennis; glass-partitioned votive chapels full of weight-lifters, masked fencers, squash players hurling themselves at walls like flies in a jar; a huge blue pool scribbled over with glyphs of gold light (the ringing air above it somehow darker and more solemn than elsewhere). The locker room, where she changed into a borrowed tracksuit, had a primary, carnal reek. How odd it felt to be back where the body was the measure and arbiter of reality. She had seldom been in this Empire since childhood.

She met Carl by the aerobics machines.

"We'll start with some stretching", he said, "if you just copy me."

She allowed her gaze to settle squarely on his body for the first time. There was an unsightly scar—like a livid rose—at the back of his thigh, but otherwise she had to concede that he looked as a human male was probably intended to look. The few others she had regarded with such license were spiders or manatees in comparison. A smooth plait of muscle was visible under his string vest, which flowed like chain-mail over his shoulders as he plunged forward on alternate knees.

Victoria sounded herself for a reaction. Was she impressed? Amused? (What would the old colleagues think if they could see her with him like this?) Ignited? None of these exactly, though when he turned to smile silently after the receding figure of a girl in a walkman who had flipped him with her towel, Victoria felt the lapse of attention like a chill from a sudden draught.

"What did you do to your leg?" she heard herself ask in a shrill voice.

He turned his attention back to her. "Propellor got me. I fell out of a boat in a power race off Virginia Beach." He grinned. "I have a lot of them. They're my souvenirs. Here, harpoon dart from the Caribbean, St Croix. . . ." He pulled a sleeve over a sheeny white gouge in his shoulder, then touched his hip; "got a steel pin in there from a hang-gliding fall. The wind decided to drop just as I did. That was in Northern Spain, Asturias Mountains. My mom swears she dies every time the phone rings when I'm off on a trip." He spoke with gentle pride. There was something touching about the unembarrassed, intimate disclosures. He seemed to take a guileless pleasure in fixing her attention on his body. Without noticing the point of transition in her own thoughts, she found herself trying to picture him stealing through the icy fog of a March dawn with a bunch of white tulips in his hand. She looked at him afresh. The image shimmered in and out of plausibility. There seemed all at once an irresistible hint of affinity between the flowers, and the boy's fair curls and limbs gleaming in the neon light. Had he been a god visiting a mortal in a dream, Victoria mused, he might have left such flowers as his tokens of remembrance. She smiled, and tried to shrug off the idea; the boy must be at least ten years younger than herself.

"Now we'll try the machines", he said.

He sat her on a bicycle and explained the principles of aerobics. He was standing beside her, just out of her field of vision, so that he was both looming and abstract. His voice was impassively polite, like an airline steward's. It was difficult to get any purchase on him, or on her relation to him, now that they were outside the simple geometries of the classroom, and now that the spectre of the tulips had been raised again. She didn't know whether to feel flattered or obscurely insulted by the way he was ordering her around. Then too, she recalled now, there was the matter of his papers—those punctual, beautifully word-processed reports on classical literature, that arrived on her desk like lambs to the slaughter, so virginally innocent were they of any content. She was almost certainly going to have to fail him at the end of the semester. It would be a pity if he thought he had done anything to make her vindictive. Awkward too. She began to wonder whether she had been incautious coming here with one of her students. Delicate suggestions of impropriety seemed to be flittering through the air. She didn't know what to do. She didn't even know what she wanted to do. The situation seemed globed in a complex burnish, like that of a vase under several layers of glaze, with a dozen different shades and hues. And at the point

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where her own feelings might have been expected to guide her, the shades merely deepened to a pitch of absolute mysteriousness.

Without warning, Carl touched her throat. As it turned out, he was only taking her pulse, but it felt like a detonation, and in the few silent seconds in which he let his fingertips rest on her jugular, her blood seemed to perform a drum-roll right beneath them, and in her agitation she pedalled furiously, as if trying to reach a speed that would persuade the fixed machine to move.

"You probably should exercise more", Carl said, and prescribed ten minutes each of cycling and rowing.

SHE SAT ON A LEDGE in the women's steam-bath, stupefied by pain and exhaustion. *See you later*, Carl had said. Did that mean later on this evening? She was as perplexed as ever.

At first, on the bicycle, the extreme physical effort had been an adventure, and she had reported on it to Carl in her customary style. "I feel like a maternity ward for new-born muscles screaming into life", she had informed him, and "the more pain you're in, the longer each second on the stopwatch seems to last. There must be a point of convergence between absolute agony and eternity. I suppose that's where hell is."

But at a certain level of exhaustion, her body had begun to reel her mind in like a kite, until it was wrapped so closely about her limbs it seemed merely a dim radiance from them, barely distinguishable from the sweat and heat. No more thoughts occurred in it; only the notation of strain and lungburn, and the wish to stop.

"I can't do any more", she gasped after the first ten minutes.

"Quick", Carl said, "it's important to keep your pulse up." He led her to the rowing machine, and was strapping her feet to the boards, heedless of her protests.

"Now pull." It seemed she must.

The seat slid back on the horizontal spine as she dragged at the weighted chain, her feet braced against the boards. The chain drove a geared wheel with flaps fixed all round it, which fanned her as she sweated. Carl stood over her, again a little behind, issuing curt instructions—*a little faster, pull harder now, keep that speed up*. . . .

A pattern had emerged: she would reach a peak of agony, slacken, be admonished, protest she had had enough, then feel a down-surge of shadow as Carl leaned forward, an indistinct mass of male form, to touch her throat. And once she had discovered the degree of protest that would bring him, she had half-consciously summoned him, as one does summon again and again the thing that most perplexes. She still wasn't sure what it was his touch induced. It felt like a panicky lurch, as over a forgotten step, or perhaps more like the lurch from a step that isn't there. It was always this way in matters of physical experience; one was more than ever the proverbial Greek in Rome; a creature of refinement thronged by the unpredictable barbarians of appetite. One never quite knew what was going on. A limitless, treacherous obscurity would open up, accompanied by a feeling of helplessness. It was this helplessness that kept her to the task. She was only capable of doing what she was told. She recognised the feeling from three or four other occasions in her adult life—the same unaccountable surrender, the same excruciating pain, the same blind obligation to go through with it.

"Okay", he said at last, "you can stop now."

She lay prone, awaiting further instructions. But he was already leaving.

"See you later", he said with a smile, and was gone.

NOW WHAT? A drama of folly seemed to be unfolding in some trembling zone between the real and the imaginary. How would it proceed, she wondered; towards a moonlit confession under the magnolias? A silent entanglement in the locked classroom? She felt quite numb towards the eventualities, as if she too were suspended in that indeterminate zone. The steam appeared to have dissolved her skin. It swirled and bloomed inside her. Blurred pink figures moved softly around the room.

And then a paler one came in and sat down opposite. It was the girl who had flipped her towel at Carl. Her skin was almost as white as the porcelain tiles, which boosted the bits of colour on her. She swept back a damp mass of reddish ringlets, yawned, wrinkled her nose, and gazed into the steam with a look of self-satisfaction.

But before that, her eyes had flickered briefly over Victoria's, and in that instant, the older woman had felt the ripple of banished illusion. One flickering look, and it was gone! She wondered at her capacity for missing the obvious. How could she have imagined Carl would be remotely interested in her when a creature like this was at his disposal? It wasn't as if she had even desired the things she had imagined, unless a weakness for the flattery of being desired be itself considered a desire. If she felt anything now, it was relief at what she had been spared.

How familiar this turn of events felt. Fantasy, disillusion, relief: the cycle seemed peculiarly her own. Even when the fantasy happened by chance to land her in a grapple with one of those spiders or manatees, there would always be a moment when something rock-like reared up with an unarguable veto to any pleasure she might have from it, and in retrospect, this moment would always seem one of deliverance. It had been so, she realised, with Bradley, after that day in New York. She had been too preoccupied with her double humiliation to notice it at the time, but after it was all over, something in her had breathed an unmistakable sigh of relief.

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Meanwhile, as she looked at the girl, she could feel the knotted burden of Carl, and the tulips, and the strain of overwork, unravelling, and it was like a physical sensation of loosening in her body.

Gradually, a mood of benign calm settled on her. She smiled ruefully to herself, thinking of Carl and the girl together—an affinity of toned flesh. She felt an almost protective magnanimity, as if she were an old priestess presiding over their nuptials. Steam made the blood tingle in her capillaries. She wondered vaguely if it was dangerous to stay too long in the room, but she had no desire to leave. She had seldom known anything so luxurious as this steam room; one felt almost afloat in the assuaging cloud. She stared out at the girl, glazed in good feeling. It wasn't often that she was able to forget herself in this way. She wondered whether the supposedly warmer, more candid palette of American emotion was at last beginning to colour her own feelings. Waves of tenderness seemed to be pulsing out of her.

THE GIRL caught her eye—a green glint—then looked away. Pink blotches had appeared on her skin. The corners of her dark red lips were drawn up further, and to a finer point than most, as if they had been detailed by an uncommonly expert hand. How nice she would look if she smiled. Victoria could hardly believe how well-disposed she felt towards her; towards everything! It seemed to her inexpressibly wonderful that Carl and this girl should be lovers. She smiled, picturing them together. The steam plumed obligingly into boas, bulged into pillows and glistening cherub-clusters. Again the girl caught her eye, and it was like a splash of sea-green against the portholes of a sinking ship. How delightful to sink like this; into a whirlpool of soft contours, mild brushstrokes of bluish shadow, steam-darkened braids and knots of copper . . . Victoria had always considered any form of body fascination to be infantile. She refused to read certain novels: *boredom not prudishness*, she would tell people; *it's like having a travel book that does nothing but tell you about the workings of the car*. And even now she had a suspicion that she ought not to indulge these feelings. But where was the harm? His hand would descend through the meadow of freckles sloping from each sunburnt shoulder to an aureole ringed, she noticed, with dainty marks that might have been cast from the paw-prints of a thimble-sized lion. She imagined the contact of hand and breast. Another green wave crashed as something exulted in her blood.

"Jesus!" The girl exploded, and jumped up, covering herself with her hands. She spat out another word as she left the room. Victoria recoiled as it tore into her, bulleting through what seemed like a series of opaque veils through which she was able to glimpse briefly the source of her imagined exultation, the glimpse fading as the rips healed, though she was not altogether spared the knowledge, because in the flurry of violation, something brilliant and silken had rippled out of her memory, and to her astonishment she was seeing a vase of those white, feathery tulips in the faculty room at the very beginning of the semester, an overheard voice saying *yes, they're pretty, my neighbour gives them to me, he's a commercial breeder*; the voice female, accented, muffled by sounds of chewing and salivation. . . .

IT TOOK A FEW DAYS for the glare of revelation to fade; something in the mixture of cruelty and craving in Ita's gesture, gave it a certain lingering fascination. At last, though, Victoria was able to consign the image and all it insinuated back to the darkness from which it had risen. All that remained of the episode in the gym was a sense of having been made a fool of, and this, along with the other indignities she had suffered over the semester, confirmed Victoria in her opposition to Branderhaven.

A day of blinding sunshine; the shadow-etched campus emptied for some annual, end-of-semester joust between Seniors and Alumni; cries drifting over from the sports field behind the gym. . . . Victoria was clearing out her desk in the classroom, enjoying a rare moment of tranquillity, when a woman knocked on the open door and strolled in. She took off a pair of sunglasses. She was handsome, big-boned, her blonde hair grained with grey; blue eyes that appeared lit from the back with mauve. She smiled at Victoria, extending a hand—

"Hi. I'm Sophie Pepperall. I think you know my son."

Most of what followed had a dreamlike, faintly incredible quality, even at the time. The woman had stood before her, pleading for her son, though pleading was not quite the word as she seemed sure of getting what she wanted, as if she were going through the motions of an elaborate ritual, purely out of some vague nostalgia for more courtly times. She was relaxed, almost playful, sunglasses dangling from one hand, the other trespassing lightly and confidently on Victoria's arm. Her gist was that Carl's place at the business school his father had attended was contingent on his not actually failing any of his subjects. A bare minimum pass all round would satisfy them, but they drew the line at failure, "which is lenient of them", she said, "considering nobody actually does fail these days. In fact it's pretty rare not to get something in the higher B's at least. Bradley Crane told me Carl was the only student he's ever known be given an actual fail. . . ." She looked at Victoria candidly, leaving the pleasant spill of colour from her eyes to express the thing that even her idea of decorum forbade her to say. Carl's face stared out from hers, boyish and vulnerable beneath her beautiful smile.

Victoria remembered telling Mrs Pepperall that her son had failed because in five papers he hadn't recorded a single accurate fact or intelligent opinion.

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Even so it had taken her several uncomfortable minutes to convince the woman that her decision was a matter of grade averages; a solid, simple mathematical fact, and not negotiable.

She was still recovering from the effort a few minutes later, when Brad strode in without knocking. He was carrying the ledger book with student grades, and he looked more dour than Victoria had ever seen him.

"I'd like you to reconsider this now", he said, opening the book and shoving his finger at the word *failed* written in Victoria's neat, tiny script.

She tried to keep her voice steady; "I've just been asked to reconsider it by his mother."

"Yes, and now I'd like to ask you again." It seemed he had thrust a pen into her hand, which was poised above the ledger. He stood waiting, his face stiff with anger.

"I'm afraid it's out of the question", she said, and flinched as if from an expected blow, as Brad leaned over the desk towards her.

"Listen to me young lady. You were hired to give these kids some background in classical myth. That's not a big deal around here, as you may have noticed. Now I don't interfere when I get reports of you making them produce scholarly papers on Greek metrics and God knows what else, but when it comes to fucking up some perfectly innocent student's career over a deal like this, then I have to tell you you're stepping out of line."

WAS THIS WHAT her Greeks thought of as *Ananke*: Necessity; the force that draws all things forward to their designated place, do what they might to resist it, so that even one's defiance of its decrees is taken into account?

She sat in the wintry shadows of her flat, facing the darkened screen of the television where the figure had tripped and lurched and spun out of control. For a moment she felt an urge to switch the set on again, not that the programme was likely to be on the same subject any longer. But even suppose it was, she told herself, and suppose the figure was indeed her Carl Pepperall, and suppose, yes just suppose, something unpleasant had happened to him, what did any of that have to do with her? She assured herself that she had done nothing to be ashamed of, that she had acted out of the same high, unflinching principle as she was now bringing to her old professor's book on Epicharmus. In the end one could only shrug, and dismiss the episode, if there even was an episode, as a grotesque coincidence, of the kind life occasionally throws up in imitation of those engineered by the lesser tragedians. It would be a mistake to look for any meaning in it. She switched on a light, and returned to her review.

But she was in tumult. She saw the empty space again, the white tulips and the treacherous steam, and the vibrant white blur of mountainside with the body sprawled on it. She saw the mother again, and the son's face buried in her features. A tremor went through her. She felt briefly the cold touch of eternity that had used her own soul as its instrument. How exquisitely it had fingered the keys!

For a moment her resistance had begun to falter. She could feel the various pressures urging her hand to make the necessary movement. She even began to lower the pen. But as it came to within two or three inches of the page, something stalled her. It was more a matter of *can't* than of *won't*. The decision seemed to come from some inflexible source of command that sent its veto like a cold wind between pen and page.

She had looked back up at Bradley, and found that her strength had rallied. With a little smile she offered him back the pen.

"You do it", she challenged him, her head tilted back. "Go on, why don't you? I won't tell anybody."

She assumed he would now inform her that this was precisely what he intended to do, and that he didn't give a damn who she told. Let him. She had acted correctly; what they did with the boy's grades was no longer any concern of hers.

But he merely snatched the pen from her hand, and snapped shut the book.

"Very amusing", he said, and walked out, leaving her with a sense of victory which even at the time had felt curiously incomplete.

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A Tall Story

The story was six miles high, and very thick.
A Literary Giant had built it, brick
by slow brick, using the wonderful gifts
of a fertile imagination. There were no lifts,
escalators, smoothing the climb to the top floor
where in his elegant rooms the Defamed Creator
issued writs through his sycophant Admen downstairs;
this was a pinnacle reached with blood and tears.

Picture a castle, a nightmare, Ogres' talk,
the book of the film of *Jack and the Beanstalk*,
and in one chapter find hidden the Ogre's wife,
beautiful and neglected, her ruined life
brought to the window-ledge for love of a dull dwarf
at street level, who might perhaps just make her laugh
again. Then read how she jumped from that jurisdiction
of terror, falling, falling, falling stranger than fiction.

John Gohorry

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C. M. Woodhouse

The Case of Captain Warren

Waldheim, TV, & a Case to Answer

WAS WALDHEIM a war criminal? So far, attempts to prove that he was have mostly been, in a juridical sense, quite ineffective. The most lamentable failure recently was the Channel 4 television programme called *Waldheim: A Commission of Enquiry*. Of course, the programme emphasised that the "Commission" was not a court of law (though five judges of different nationality presided over it), and that it was only seeking to show whether there was a case for Waldheim to answer. But the so-called "Presenting Counsel" and "Challenging Counsel" behaved just as if they were acting respectively for the prosecution and the defence of Waldheim. Indisputably, as the judges unanimously agreed, the defence won.

The defence won, in fact, within the first ten minutes, when Lord Rawlinson (the "Challenging Counsel") pointed out that it would be absurd to charge Waldheim, who had been a First Lieutenant at the time, with the very crimes for which two Chiefs of Staff (General Foertsch and General Geitner) under whom he had served had been tried after the War, and acquitted. Presumably a real court of law would have thrown out the case without more ado. But that cannot be done in a "trial by television", because the producing companies have invested too much money in it. So the pointless proceedings had to go on and on across our screens for several hours.

Lord Rawlinson could have added the example of another General to the two he cited. This was Lanz, who commanded the XXII Mountain Corps Group at Ioannina in northern Greece. When the Italians broke with the Germans in September 1943, Waldheim acted as Lanz's interpreter (according to one of his own colleagues) in negotiating with the *Acqui* Division under General Gandin's command in Cephallonia. After refusing to surrender, the division was attacked by the Germans in overwhelming strength, and finally surrendered with heavy losses. It emerged at Lanz's trial for war crimes in 1947 that he had then disobeyed an order from Hitler to execute some 6-7,000 prisoners, and a second order to execute at least their officers. On this count, he was convicted only of sanctioning, under heavy pressure, the court-martial and execution of Gandin and his staff. How could any charge in this grim affair be brought against a junior officer who acted merely as an interpreter?

These examples illustrate the fallacy of regarding Waldheim as if he should have been in the dock at Nuremberg alongside the major criminals. It is a fallacy which underlay the whole trend of Channel 4's *Commission of Enquiry*. The prosecution tacitly assumed that a First Lieutenant on the intelligence staff of an Army Group headquarters, who had no executive authority and could give no orders to anyone except the clerks and orderlies in his office, could be held responsible for crimes against humanity on a massive scale. The disproportion between the crimes and the supposed criminal would be ridiculous if the circumstances were not so heart-rending. It suggests that the prosecutors, like seasoned television performers, were more concerned to rend hearts than to convict Waldheim.

THE GREATER PART of the programme was devoted to an elaborate demonstration of a sufficiently well-known fact—that the Germans committed appalling atrocities in occupied Yugoslavia and Greece. Barely a quarter of the time was devoted to any attempt to link Waldheim with these atrocities. During long stretches of the prosecution case, his name was scarcely even mentioned. A typical *non sequitur* was the appearance before the "Commission" of two British ex-Commandos (Captain Bluett and Private Davies) who, according to the logic of the prosecution's case, should have been executed. Most fortunately, they were not. No one could have been happier to see them than myself, because at the time of their capture they belonged to a unit of the "Raiding Support Regiment" (RSR), for which I was then responsible. But, although they were certainly treated most brutally, there was not the faintest hint that Waldheim should be held responsible.

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There was even a shadow of a hint that Waldheim might have been the officer (seen by Bluett only out of the corner of his eye) whose intervention led to the cessation of his physical maltreatment. I do not believe this to be so, for reasons which will appear later. But the paradox of this episode is that Bluett was questioned only by the "presenting" (or prosecuting) Counsel, who never even mentioned Waldheim's name at this juncture; and not at all by the "challenging" (or defending) Counsel, who might have used his evidence to suggest that Waldheim was not such a villain after all. The subject was simply dropped, and never mentioned again except by the presiding judge, very non-committally, in the closing stages.

It was a pity that the evidence of the surviving Commandos was allowed to peter out so inconclusively, since this was the only episode in the entire "Commission" proceedings which fell within a level of responsibility at which Waldheim was in a position to exercise any influence at all. It was futile to try to blame him personally for burned villages, mass murders, and deportations. If a man in his junior position were to be held responsible for them, hundreds of thousands of post-War trials would have had to take place, which would have gone on for years and years, until even the lawyers had tired of them.

This does not mean that Waldheim was an innocent man. It means that the Channel 4 programme was largely irrelevant because it was aimed at the wrong targets. It means also that Waldheim should be judged only in the context of matters which fell within his actual level of responsibility. The treatment of captured Commandos, guerrillas or partisans was, in this context, relevant, but the rest of the charges made against him at Channel 4's "Commission" were almost certainly not. It is one such case, not considered by the "Commission", that I propose to examine in detail.

I ADMIT IN ADVANCE that I am prejudiced in this case, which concerns one of the nicest of my own wartime officers. After all, for someone to have been condemned to death by Hitler does create some prejudice against his willing acolytes. Although, extraordinary as it must seem, I had never heard of Hitler's general order for the execution (that is to say, murder) of captured Commandos, whom he called *Sabotagetruppen*, until a year or two ago.

Hitler's "Commando Order" was issued on 18 October 1942. It decreed that all allied "sabotage troops" captured in German-occupied countries were to be "completely exterminated", even if they were captured in uniform. One or two might be spared temporarily for interrogation, but were to be shot immediately after they had been questioned. This was called "special treatment", and was normally the responsibility of the *SS* or the *SD*. The order was, of course, incontrovertibly criminal.

In an explanatory memorandum, Hitler reasoned that the Allies would always find volunteers for "this kind of campaign" as long as they could be sure that they were "not in mortal danger"—in other words, that they were protected by the Geneva Convention. But, he argued, such men were not entitled to be treated as prisoners of war because they were engaged in "cruel and deceitful acts" against unsuspecting German soldiers. Part of their deceit was that they often had in their possession civilian clothes as well as military uniforms, and they could therefore, as circumstances required, "appear either as civilians or as soldiers".

A week or two before the order was signed, its general purport was broadcast on German radio. Therefore no staff officer in the German Army could have claimed ignorance of it. However, the order itself was not published, although that would have been the natural way to stem the flow of volunteers. On the contrary, the German High Command ordered complete secrecy on the subject. Hitler personally laid it down that the "special treatment" should always be camouflaged in official communiqués by a simple statement to the effect that "a troop intent on sabotage, terror or destruction, was discovered and killed to the last man. . . ."

IT IS UNCERTAIN how soon the order became known to the Allies, though presumably the preliminary broadcast was monitored. The order could hardly have been known in detail before the first British unit (consisting of six officers and two NCO's) was parachuted into Greece, because we dropped on the last night of September 1942, 18 days before the "Commando Order" itself was signed. We could not, therefore, have been forewarned about the consequences of capture, though we were equipped with poison pills, which implied the worst. I don't know whether any of those who followed us later were forewarned, but certainly none of them ever said anything about it to me. I know of only one man who confirmed that he had been forewarned: an American medical orderly in the RAMC, not serving with our force. He was not condemned to "special treatment", and he survived the War, evidently because he was an unarmed non-combatant.

Before coming to the particular case of my own officer, it is worth making it clear that Hitler's order was not universally put into effect. Apart from the American medical orderly mentioned above, there were others who were spared. In at least one case, mentioned in the report of the Austrian Historical Commission which investigated Waldheim's war record, a German officer took the initiative himself in reporting a captured British Commando to the Swiss Red Cross in Athens. Bluett and Davies also owed their survival to the Red Cross.

It was even claimed, by a witness before Channel 4's "Commission", that a corresponding order from Hitler in August 1943, for the execution of captured "bandits" (meaning our guerrillas and partisans), was "widely ignored" in practice. However, the German ex-officer who made that claim would have been extremely hard put to quote an example, if he had been further questioned (which he was not). In the past 40 years I have met innumerable ex-guerrillas in Greece, but never one who had been captured and spared. It deserves to be recorded, on the other hand, that in no case known to me did the Greek forces overseas, fighting the Germans in North Africa and Italy, take reprisals on their enemy prisoners.

Protection by the Red Cross was only available with excep-

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tionally good luck, especially for the Greeks, because the HQ of Army Group E at Thessaloniki was ruled with a rod of iron by General Loehr (who was hanged as a war criminal after the War). For him, there was no question of reporting the capture of "bandits" or *Sabotagetruppen* to the Red Cross, because they were not prisoners of war. Few, if any, of his staff would take the risk: certainly not Waldheim, who had his office in the village of Arsakli, a few miles from Thessaloniki.

Nevertheless, Captain Bluett survived, with two of his private soldiers, Davies and Bennett. So did an officer of my force, Captain J. W. S. Hamilton, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who was captured with Bluett's party. How did this come about? There are two distinct stories; and there may be truth in both of them.

ALL FOUR WERE captured together. "Jock" Hamilton had been with my force for nearly a year. The other three belonged to the Raiding Support Regiment, units of which were infiltrated in the early summer of 1944 into various parts of Greece, to strengthen the guerrillas' fire power. Hamilton had been sent to the west coast to meet Bluett's party on its arrival from Italy by sea, and to conduct it to its operational area in Macedonia. By mischance, they ran into a strong German force in the hills north of Ioannina. After a brisk encounter, the RSR unit was scattered, but these four were taken prisoner. They were sent to Thessaloniki for interrogation at Army Group E, and held in the most squalid conditions by the Secret Field Police. Waldheim, at Arsakli, knew of their whereabouts, but probably had little or nothing to do with their interrogation. His function was chiefly to write up reports on the events of the day (the "War Diary"), including the outcome of interrogations. There is some uncertainty, however, about his exact role on such occasions.

In an interview on Austrian State Television two years ago, Waldheim said, in answer to a question, that he could not remember whether he had ever been present at interrogations, but perhaps on a few occasions he had been. Later, he corrected this answer, saying that he never had been. His memory is notoriously fickle; but if it is allowed to exonerate him from any participation in the maltreatment of prisoners, it must also disqualify him from any claim to have intervened to prevent maltreatment.

Hamilton and Bluett were certainly maltreated. Quite separately, and many years apart, both described vicious beatings and mock executions. According to a German ex-private soldier, who gave evidence to Channel 4's "Commission", he and a colleague had interrogated Hamilton and Bluett "humanely"; and his colleague arranged their transfer to hospital. This ensured their protection by the Red Cross. Bluett (in the same TV programme) denied that any of his interrogators had been "humane", but agreed that the beatings had ceased. It is strange that the two men were not confronted with each other, or their stories compared by the "Commission". Nor was Bluett asked to explain how or by whom he thought his transfer to hospital had been arranged.

Jock Hamilton gave a different account to his family after the War. He was saved by a Greek doctor in the same prison, who undertook to smuggle information about him to the Swedish Red Cross. Hamilton wrote his personal details on a scrap of paper, which was buried in a bucket of pig-swill. The doctor briefed a friendly Greek worker to pass the message to the Red Cross. The trick succeeded, and Hamilton was transferred to hospital. (Like Bluett, he survived the War in German prison-camps; but he died in 1958 at the age of 39.) The story of the Greek doctor rings true. It is at least certain that no such escape from Hitler's "Commando Order" was ever attributable to Waldheim. That would have required moral courage, a resource which was not available to him.

The examples given show that it was possible to circumvent Hitler's order, provided that news of the captured victims did not reach Hitler himself (as it did in the tragic case of the Commandos captured on the Aegean island of Alimnia). It might have been possible for Waldheim to devise similar tactics in another case—that of Captain D. A. La Touche Warren, of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers—in which he was directly involved, shortly after the capture of Hamilton's party. Instead, Waldheim's conduct of the case made it doubly sure that Warren would be murdered. Whether he did so deliberately, I cannot say. Only Waldheim's conscience can answer that question; but of the outcome, there is no question.

"BUNNY" WARREN was born at Brisbane in 1914, and educated at Geelong. As he was in England when the War broke out in 1939, he joined the British instead of the Australian Army. Early in 1943, he was posted with his regiment to the Middle East, where he served for several months in the North African desert. He then volunteered to serve with SOE, and joined my force in Greece in August 1943. Although I saw a good deal of him, I never discovered if he knew about Hitler's "Commando Order". It was a question which I could not ask because I knew nothing about it myself.

Early in 1944, he was put in charge of an attempt to evacuate a group of escaped prisoners of war from Greece to Italy. The group consisted of an American civilian, born in Chicago of Polish parents, who had been conscripted for forced labour by the Germans in occupied Poland; and 22 Russian and Polish soldiers from labour-camps near Athens.

The plan was to sail in a Greek-crewed caique from a small bay on the northern shore of the Gulf of Corinth. As it took some time to find a suitable caique and crew, they didn't set out until late March. At first they made good progress, out of the Gulf and beyond Cephallonia. But on 25 March the caique broke down and drifted back towards the island. It was captured by a German coastal motor-launch.

The prisoners were taken first to Patras in the Peloponnese, where the garrison came under the command of XXII Mountain Corps Group at Ioannina (General Lanz). The Corps headquarters ordered that they should be sent to Army Group E at Thessaloniki for interrogation. One Russian succeeded in escaping, and rejoined us in the mountains after a series of adventures. It was from him that we first learned of the disaster; however, it was already too late.

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The preliminary report from Ioannina to Army Group E described the party as a *Sabotagetrupp*, and said that it was armed with two machine-guns and various automatics and pistols. Almost certainly the so-called machine-guns were Stens, since we had nothing heavier; and if we had, we could not have spared them for such a mission. The party's equipment (which included no explosives and no hand-grenades) could only have served for self-defence. Since, in any case, the party was leaving and not entering Greece, it was nonsensical to call it a *Sabotagetrupp*. The staff officer in Ioannina was just mechanically echoing Hitler's "Commando Order".

This would have been obvious to a competent intelligence officer such as Lieutenant Waldheim, who was on leave in Austria at the time. When he returned to Arsakli on 16 April, he became closely involved in the case. He probably took no part in any of the interrogations, though he may have been present at them occasionally. But he did draft a summary and commentary based on the interrogation reports. This document was signed by his superior, Major Hammer, on 8 May. Waldheim's familiar initial, immediately above that signature, guarantees his authorship. In order to evaluate his contribution to Warren's fate, it is necessary to examine this very curious document closely.

At some stage, the document suffered massive deletions with a brush-tipped pen, which made much of it totally illegible. Where, when, and why these deletions were made is still a mystery. Along with most of the German Wartime archives, the document was shipped to Washington at the end of the War, but repatriated to the West German Federal Archives in the 1960s. It seems unlikely that the deletions were made in Germany, and more probable that they were made in Washington. Yet their purpose is difficult to understand. If the reason was to shield Waldheim, it is inexplicable that his own incriminating initial should be left intact. Besides, this is the only document relevant to Waldheim's record which has so far been found in such a mutilated state.

The deletions are somewhat haphazard, and carelessly made. Crucial data seem to have been deleted at one point while left visible at others. For example, two complete lines are deleted at the beginning of the second paragraph, but they clearly refer to Captain Warren, whose name appears intact five lines later in the same paragraph. The details of his regiment and war service are also still legible, which puts the identification beyond doubt. There then follows the only material point extracted by Waldheim from Warren's interrogation report:

> "Warren did not consider it practical to entrust the execution of sabotage operations to the Greeks on their own because of their limited reliability. He would not give an account of his own activity, although the interrogator gave an undertaking that he need not reveal anything about his comrades."[1]

Warren would certainly not have introduced the word "sabotage" of his own accord. We never regarded our operations as "sabotage". They were military operations, carried out by organised units, however small, and always in recognisable uniform. But the fatal word might easily have been introduced by the interrogator. It is known that German interrogators had standing instructions to try to compromise prisoners in such ways. If this was the case, the term was perhaps unwittingly accepted by Warren, and much less unwittingly by Waldheim when he wrote his report.

There must have been many other topics on which the interrogator tried to extract information from Warren. Why was this topic alone singled out by Waldheim for inclusion in his report? The answer is not hard to guess. It was because the word "sabotage" was an instant reminder of the "Commando Order", and because the words attributed to Warren implied that he himself took part in "sabotage" operations. This was the first, although not the only phrase in Lieutenant Waldheim's report which sealed Captain Warren's fate.

There followed a long paragraph on the interrogation of the American civilian. His name is obliterated, but it apparently began with M. Most of the paragraph is taken up with his personal details and his movements in the Greek mountains after his escape from a labour-gang on a building site. He had only been free for about nine months, mostly on the run, before he was recaptured. The only certain conclusion that could be drawn from his interrogation was that he could not possibly have been a member of a *Sabotagetrupp*. But Waldheim did not trouble to make that point (unless, improbably, it was deleted).

The Russian and Polish soldiers interested him more. The paragraphs based on their interrogation are the most extensive (and also the most heavily deleted) in the whole report. Waldheim seems to have been determined to find something particularly sinister about their inclusion in Captain Warren's party. As a result, these paragraphs contain a good deal of speculation of his own. The factual details, on the other hand, are reasonably near the mark. They include the locations of some of our stations in the mountains, and the uneasy state of our relations with the guerrilla leadership.

There are other correctly reported details: that the escaped prisoners had been questioned at our headquarters by a Greek interpreter who spoke English and Russian; that their presence with us had been reported by radio to our GHQ in Cairo; that the Soviet Consul in Cairo had been informed; and that we had been instructed to ship the whole party to Italy, for onward transit to the Middle East. In the meantime, so the Russians and Poles said, they had been well treated by the British. This seemed to Waldheim so abnormal that it called for explanation.

Waldheim's interpretation is contained in the final paragraphs of his report:

> "To summarise, it is established that there must exist in Athens and its environs a network of secret agents (*Agen-*

[1] The reference to "the interrogator" in the third person does not necessarily rule out the possibility that Waldheim was himself the interrogator; but I give him the benefit of the doubt.

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tennetz) supported and organised by the British, which influences the Russian and Polish volunteer workers employed by German units, and by means of pressure or promises puts them in touch with the British Military Mission indirectly through the Bands.

"The treatment of the Russians by the British Military Mission points to the conclusion that the British have a special interest in the Russian volunteer workers located in the Greek region. There is therefore the probability [2 words deleted] the attempt was made on higher orders to convey the Russian prisoners of war back to the Soviet Army. . . .

"It can reasonably be supposed that the Russians who were on their way back to Cairo from Greece would have been re-infiltrated into Greece later with special instructions depending on the assessment of conditions in the Greek region."

All of this was pure fantasy. We had no such *Agentennetz*. For all we knew, the prisoners had all escaped entirely on their own initiative. Not only did we not prompt their escape: their presence in the mountains was in fact a severe embarrassment to us, because the Communist leadership of the "National Liberation Front" (*EAM*) wanted to enrol them in its "National Popular Liberation Army" (*ELAS*), and there was nothing that these Russians and Poles wanted less. To avoid friction, our only course was to evacuate them from Greece, and we certainly never wanted to see them back again.

Being no fool, Waldheim could not possibly have derived such nonsensical conclusions, in good faith, from properly and honestly conducted interrogations. One naturally suspects the honesty of the interrogators, but it was Waldheim's duty as an intelligence officer to monitor their reliability. The inferences from the interrogation reports were drawn by Waldheim himself, not by the interrogators. Can it really be supposed that he was acting in good faith? The introduction into his report of two words whose implications were entirely baseless—*Sabotage* and *Agentennetz*—strongly suggests that he was not. The first word brought Warren inexorably within the scope of Hitler's "Commando Order"; the second linked him with espionage. They were the equivalent of a sentence of death.

Probably Captain Warren was doomed in any case. General Loehr was insistent on the strict fulfilment of the "Commando Order". But even fear of his Commander-in-Chief did not justify Waldheim's fabrication of a mendacious report on baseless "evidence". So far as one can construe his purpose from the written record, it was simply to ensure that the inevitable execution—that is to say, murder—was legally watertight under Nazi "law".

Waldheim's report was received by the High Command on 14 May. Independent evidence indicates that Captain D. A. L. Warren was executed on or soon after 15 May. One ex-inmate of the same prison reported after the War that Warren had tried to escape by tunnelling from his cell; and those who knew him will not doubt that he tried. Another prisoner (one of the Russians) said that he was taken out of his cell one night about 11 p.m. and never seen again. Today I know with virtual certainty the name of his actual murderer in the *SD* at Thessaloniki.

Waldheim, of course, was no more than an accessory in the murder of my friend. It cannot even be called a "judicial murder", since there was no trial. Very strangely, Waldheim seems not to have been struck by the criminality of such procedures, although he had received his Doctorate of Law at the University of Vienna only a few weeks before implicating himself in Captain Warren's murder. There were some aspects of the concept of law which he evidently never grasped. A suitable epitaph for his life one day might be a couplet from Arthur Clough's poem, *The Latest Decalogue*:

Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

Was Waldheim a war criminal? It is impossible yet to say conclusively. There is still a good deal more to be learned about his war record. Files are known to exist in official keeping, in London, Washington and elsewhere, which have a bearing on his case, but these are still closed to serious researchers. The sincerity of some branches of certain governments in discovering the truth is by no means above suspicion. This much is certain: if more of the truth does eventually emerge, it will be from patient and detailed research at the actual level of Waldheim's responsibility, not from television extravaganzas like Channel 4's *Commission of Enquiry*.

I was certainly relieved that I had refused to take part in the programme. No doubt the mandarins of the Independent Broadcasting Authority would say, as they have said before, that I have nobody to blame but myself, because if I had not refused I would have had the opportunity to make sure that my point of view was heard. That delusion would suggest that they have never taken part in such a programme themselves.

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Three Poems by John Greening

Queen Elizabeth to Edward IV

I remember May Day,
and the may-pole
we danced around.

You had told your court
that you were gone
into the country—and O!

we hunted well
that afternoon
in my great bed:

over the ha-ha
and straight into
the chase,

astride, through
your royal forest
we rode, you voracious

for a kill, I
for the sounding
of the mort.

I could not conceive—
crossing the bridge
towards

that sacred altar
to present my sacrifice,
when I saw

such images hanging there
of your beautiful face,
so many Edwards

in tinfoil, winking
and rippling
like the God of Love

above the complaisant
River Thames—that now
I was the Queen

I was a beast
to be taken at
the King's pleasure.

Again it is May Day,
and the may-pole
has been erected—

not for me, but for
those "merriest, wiliest,
and holiest" harlots

that you laughingly
tell me about
as you pass by.

If I had not said
yes when you requested
the rights

of warren in my husband's
bed, Elizabeth
Woodville would

be the Queen of England
truly—the only carcass
there to have eluded you.

The Lists of Coventry

Then, it was just a means of arbitration,
Ordeal by mass entertainment: two knights,
Like glittering exhibition cases, armed,

Escutcheoned, and embroidered, their chased
Lances quivering at the opposite ends
Of a concourse, waiting for the first trumpet

To send painted Swan and Antelope charging
Down on painted Mulberry Tree and Lion;
Or a more urgent trumpet—like the voice

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Of a ten-year-old trying to make himself
Heard above his advisers, above the mob
Writhing around Wat Tyler's corpse—to cry out

"Let me be your leader!", and in a
Kingfisher flash of crimson and green-blue
Velvet, prevent the bloodshed. A lover

Of spectacle, and the colourful arts
Of peace, King Richard stands up to flourish
Words in illuminated filigree

From a goat-hide scroll . . . and we recollect
That Pathé shot of Chamberlain after Munich;
Or a dark-suited, bespectacled John Nott

Stumbling through the lists of British losses.

Richard I

Saladin sends me
more fresh chickens
to feed the hawk

he has heard I take
such risks
in keeping here.

He understands
that the man
possessing a lion's heart

must own all other parts
appropriate to a lion,
and that I do not

hunger only
after the cold sepulchre
of Jerusalem,

but worship each
of these warm
gifts he has sent

to me, their flesh
so maddeningly
sweet that

my physicians
advise me
I should not indulge.

Yes I am sick—
but sickness is all
I have ever enjoyed

since first I
leant crookedly on
my pilgrim staff

and felt it snap
under me,
or since the night

came muttering
how the King should
put away

all unlawful deeds
and beware
the Fate of Sodom.

I have become
like an "Assassin",
drugged, lured

into the Old Man
of the Mountain's false
paradise, to try

the most smooth-skinned,
soft, ripe,
and luscious-tasting

of his promises:
that after death
there will be no hood

on the instinct,
no curb
to the desires.

O Saladin,
I desire you
to send me no more

heathen street-fowl,
but fruit and snow only,
fresh fruit, fresh snow.

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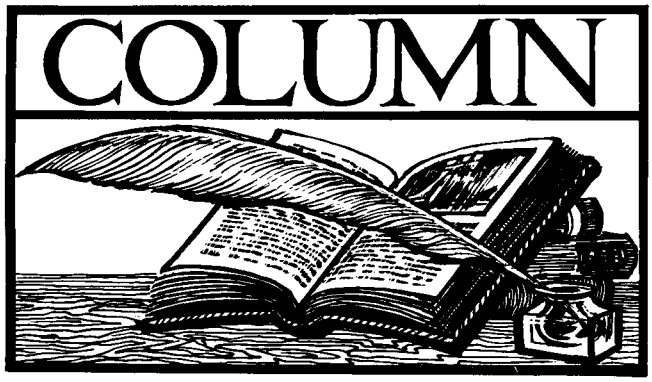

A FAVOURITE misprint many years ago called *The New Statesman, The Spectator*, and *Time and Tide* "intellectual weaklies". As well as suggesting limp, lanky aesthetes in the gruff tweed jackets and bright woollen ties that were once the uniform of London's Bohemia, the phrase hinted at the charm the magazines held for a whole generation of reluctant Wartime servicemen.

Amid the danger and the spit-and-polish (combined in the ritual rowdiness of the Officers' Mess), the weeklies were a precious link with civilian values—dissent, introversion, cowardice, art. On leave or off duty, we dressed and behaved as much like dandies and gourmets as rationing would allow. In our map pockets we carried *Horizon* or *Penguin New Writing*; and every weekend we pored over columns by the likes of Harold Nicolson, Robert Lynd, Raymond Mortimer, and "William Whitebait" (G. W. Stonier, *The New Statesman*'s expert on films).

The very names recall a vanished epoch: but much the same cast of characters persisted well into the peace. On leaving Cambridge for post-graduate work in Rome, I made the rounds of the weeklies to see if any of them wanted an Italian correspondent. *Time and Tide*, Lady Rhondda's once feminist publication, had jolly offices in Bloomsbury Street, seemingly staffed by that year's prettiest débutantes. They gave me a book on Robert Flaherty to review. *The Spectator*, in a snootier building at 99 Gower Street, was deep in debate about Moroccan politics on the day I looked in; but its editors thought they might like an occasional piece on Italian culture.

The New Statesman was by far the oddest of the three. Its headquarters, at Great Turnstile on the corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields, seemed aptly named. Not only was there constant coming-and-going: the office was also a crossroads where two quite different routes met. On that occasion I missed the great, troubled, hawklike Kingsley Martin, with his craggy brows and his eye for the girls playing tennis in the square. Instead, I saw his assistant Aylmer Vallance, a former Colonel in War Office Intelligence, known as "the Admiral" on account of his neat and nautical beard. His tone was unnerving. "D'you have good contacts in Rome?" "Oh yes", I lied airily. Then I went upstairs to the "back half" of the magazine.

This was the literary and arts section, run at that time as virtually a separate fief: so separate that its editors came in and out by the fire-escape, allegedly to avoid meeting their political colleagues on the floors below. The company here was certainly more relaxing. I remember, later, concocting wild jokes and fantasies with V. S. Pritchett, John Raymond, and Janet Adam Smith.

So began an association that lasted for about 20 years. Rapidly acquiring Italian contacts, I proudly became *The New Statesman* Rome correspondent, and was sometimes gratified to see even Reuter taking me seriously enough to quote. Altogether, I must have written nearly two hundred articles for the paper, most of them for its book pages, and many in what Cyril Connolly called the white man's grave of journalism—the slot for novel reviews.

What made it possible, and usually agreeable, was the cheerful eclecticism that reigned. I disagreed with some of the paper's politics, notably its hostility to European integration. But even in news stories I was able to take a different line on, say, the European Defence Community; and in book reviews one could say whatever one chose. One review consisted largely of a drawing—a pen-and-ink parody of Bernard Buffet. There was no censorship, even of facetious strap headlines like "SNOW—MAJOR READ AHEAD!" A series of tolerant editors made a contributor's life easy, and fun.

Editing calls for curious qualities, not always connected with writing skill or common sense. Kingsley Martin wrote a good "London Diary", if too often quoting his jobbing gardener; but his political instincts could be wayward, and he was sometimes both cunning and naive—a dread combination. Yet he was a brilliant editor, a magpie or jackdaw alert for brilliance and quirks. People used to say that the "front half" of *The New Statesman* was predictable. So it was—but not always; and the "back half" was a constantly surprising feast. Sharp, witty, perceptive writing; fierce rigour, especially with faulty scholarship or slipshod translations; a sense of poise and dash without snobbish smartness: these were what marked the books and arts section in its heyday. They were what had attracted their khaki-clad admirers and what kept some of them as contributors, however gruesomely underpaid.

THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED. Kingsley Martin retired in 1960, to be followed by John Freeman, Paul Johnson, and Richard Crossman. Under Crossman, *The New Statesman* became, so to speak, *The Old Politician*. Apparently fixated on the affairs of the Labour Party, and committed to an anti-European crusade, it began to lose readers no less rapidly than its rivals. Not long afterwards, it degenerated into an ugly, ill-tempered parish magazine for the *groupuscule* Left, with "committed" book reviews, hectic attempts at investigative journalism, and margins as narrow as bootlace ties. Briefly, John Lloyd did his best to rescue it—even daring to criticise unilateral nuclear disarmament: but he left, in circumstances undisclosed but guessable; and now the magazine has merged with *New Society* in the hope of saving them both.

No one who cares for a free press could do other than wish them well. The first few joint issues look promising, if uncertain in manner. The very first carried the front-page headline "IT'S NO JOKE"—referring to a possible miscarriage of justice; and although it retained the old "*This England*" column of comic *faits divers*, jokes rather seemed to be lacking. Together with *New Society*'s social-worker appointments ad-

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vertisements—long a source of steady revenue until recent cutbacks—it also inherited the rather numbing length of its stable-mate's articles, emphasised by lavish, large-page layout and aggressive black sanserif heads. The elegant exuberance of the early *New Statesman* and the present *Spectator* has evidently gone out of style. The paper's habitual expression now seems to be an angry, worried frown.

New readers might think that it always had been—if they relied for information on a *New Statesman* anthology published at about the time the merger took place. This is *Lines of Dissent*, edited by Stephen Howe, who teaches politics at Ruskin College, Oxford, and whose "main research interests and publications", we're told, "have been in the history of British imperialism."[1] He seems to have done quite a job colonising the *New Statesman* archives in the name of mirthless politics.

TRUE, HIS CHOSEN contributors include Samuel Beckett, whom he calls "the incredible shrinking man"; the American jazz critic, Ralph J. Gleason, on the passing of the Beat Generation; Paul Johnson excoriating Ian Fleming; Mervyn Jones on long hair; Malcolm Muggeridge on Eden; Tom Nairn on Connolly's *The Unquiet Grave*; Conor Cruise O'Brien on Yeats; V. S. Pritchett on the death of Orwell; "Sagittarius" on nerves and secrecy; Clancy Sigal on some British yobbos; C. P. Snow on "the two cultures"; and Rebecca West on *Women in Love*.

But that makes precious few literary articles, and even fewer surprises or smiles. The vast mass of contributions are leaden landmarks on the political march of time—just the sort of solemn stodge that so many readers put up with, in the old days, for the sake of the rest. More recently, the rest became just as rebarbative. In that sense, *Lines of Dissent* quite accurately reflects the state of the paper in most of the last few years.

In his Introduction to the book, Christopher Hitchens addresses the vexed question of the "front half" and the "back half":

> "As so often, Richard Crossman has bequeathed us an encapsulating statement that is so wrongheaded and philistine as to allow a general critique. 'It is recognised', he wrote in May 1956, 'that left-wing politics are digestible only if they are coated with a thick sugar of arts, entertainments and book reviews, not to mention "classified ads" which enable the superior reader to assure his Tory friends that he always starts reading at the last page and works backwards.'"

This, says Hitchens, is "a perfect statement of how *not* to think about the literary aspect of New Statesmanship". So how should it be done? "Most thoughtful people", he answers in a shuddersome phrase, "know that there is *some* connection between the literary and political aspects of culture. But they also realise that nothing is more annihilating of a culture than its politicisation." *The New Statesman*, he claims, "never became part of the doomed tendency to 'party writing' that so disfigured the idea of 'committed literature' between the wars." Not between the wars, no. But certainly later. Stephen Howe, the book's editor, even hints that the magazine was moving in that direction between 1945 and 1960:

> "The Editor and the paper advocated and welcomed each successive decolonisation, though it remained to be seen just how much of the NS's self-assured metropolitan radicalism might prove to have rested on that very imperial power. At the same time a more acerbic vein of cultural criticism emerged, exemplified in the early writing of Paul Johnson, as contributors probed for the decay they perceived beneath the sheen of 'affluence' in Conservative Britain."

To many people who read or wrote for *The New Statesman* in those years, this image of demented dentistry will seem bizarre, to say the least. Especially since Hitchens contradicts it and appears to support Crossman when he writes:

> "During this same time, people bought the NS simply in order to read Eric Hobsbawm on Jazz or John Berger on painting. There was no 'trend' there, except in favour of people who wrote with gusto and knew and cared what they were talking about."

Q.E.D.

So what went wrong? Hitchens supplies his own conjectural answer:

> "In recent years, with the intensification of showbiz values in publishing and in mass media generally, the NS has not found a voice in which to speak with much confidence. In particular, it has looked and felt uneasy in trying to keep up with the 'avid consumer' style of iconoclasm, where writing and criticism is [sic] little more than the monitoring and publicising of new waves. This sort of coverage *does* conform to Crossman's pretended idea: people buy colourful anarchic rags in order to find what's on and feel no corresponding obligation to peruse the frantic essays and interviews in the 'front half'. One doubts, however, that they have many Tory friends to whom they must apologise for this lapse."

The editors of *Time Out* and *City Limits* may appreciate that. Personally, I feel that it's a very partial explanation. So much depends upon accident. When Karl Miller left *The New Statesman* to edit the BBC's *Listener*, he took with him a number of his literary contributors, myself included. I went on writing for the *Statesman*, but intermittently: I felt increasingly at odds with its prevailing ethos, now said to be influenced by a cabal within the staff. Like the Labour Party, the paper seemed to be growing shriller and less reasonable, losing touch with Gaitskellite, Crosslandian ideals and the Centre-Left broad church. Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?

But that, too, is only a partial diagnosis. All the weeklies, except *The Economist*, have fallen on hard times since the

[1] *Lines of Dissent: Writing from the New Statesman 1913 to 1988.* Edited by STEPHEN HOWE. Introduction by CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS. Verso, £14.95, $24.95.

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1960s. One reason is increased competition—from the Sunday papers and their colour supplements, from television, and from the general growth in reading-matter of all kinds. For comment on the week's news, *plus* investigative journalism, *plus* arts and book reviews, three serious Sunday newspapers now take almost a morning to read. For gossip, the supplements and television offer colour pictures, not just text. For specialised interests, from antiques to zoology, specialised magazines now scoop the pool. The intellectual weeklies—like the monthlies—must offer something special if they want to succeed.

Pace Christopher Hitchens, the listings magazines have found one brilliant answer. They supply a genuine service, larded it's true with often perverse comments, but competing in their feature articles with just the kind of reporting that *The New Statesman* has lately embraced. At the far end of the spectrum, *The Economist* is equally brilliant—as much a weekly newspaper as a magazine of comment, breaking stories on economics and technology that its daily rivals barely touch. Significantly, too, its crisp, hard-hitting books section has now expanded to include somewhat softer coverage of the other arts.

WHETHER THE combined resources of the old *New Statesman* and the old *New Society* could ever match the success of these very different competitors is a moot point. News-gathering is expensive: listings are great consumers of time and space. And people buy *The Economist* and the listings magazines for solid reasons: to make money, and to see shows. However good an intellectual weekly's investigative reporting, it can hardly offer its readers the chance of a fast buck. And however good its reviews section, it can never tell them everything they want to know.

So one's forced back to that old but sadly rare asset: good writing. At its best—barely represented in *Lines of Dissent*—even the political writing in the old *New Statesman* had plenty of zing and pizazz. The writing on the arts had wit and depth as well. Today's best regular magazine writing seems to be found—in Britain—in *The Spectator, The Listener*, and *The Literary Review*. None has a distinctive political line, although *The Spectator* has Tory and High Church affinities, *The Listener* supports public service broadcasting, and *The Literary Review* reflects the heterodoxies of its editor Auberon Waugh. What they have in common is the capacity to surprise the reader—often by opening new territory or voicing new thoughts. Each, admittedly, has its coterie failings. *The Spectator* has been described, unkindly, as A. N. Wilson at prayer. *The Listener* can seem media-besotted. *The Literary Review* can seem mad. But no one could ever call them dull.

Dullness is the trap which the new *New Statesman/New Society* must assiduously avoid. As a first step, it should weed out its contributors: hang on to the golden and silver pens, and drop the lead pencils. It should reconsider its layout—make it less flashy, get rid of the rash of solid rules. Above all, it should wipe the frown off its face, and be funnier at the expense of what it attacks. I don't mean that it should soften its political line: far from it. But a smiling opponent can be much more dangerous than a whining, perpetual grouch. Otherwise—who knows? The next misprint may dismiss it as an intellectual wrinkly. I hope not.

M

Monopoly

Father
Laid out the money, the cards and the houses,
Hotels and the antique counters,
With a flourish of anticipation
And the family sat in ritual seats
Around the annual board
Whispering "I had forgotten
This little shoe . . . the water works . . .
And the pleasure of possessing
So much money."

Deals were made for younger children
Far beyond their skill
'Til, in the heat of the moment,
Their needs were swept aside
In the glorious moment
of triumph.

And again, another ritual
Father wins the game
For which there is no prize—
Except a monopoly.

Christina J. Preston

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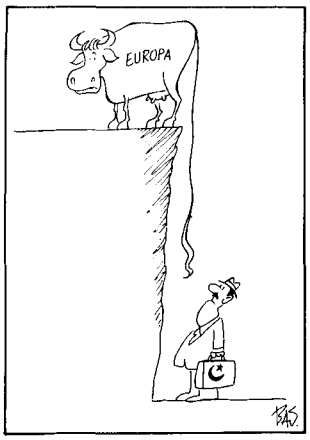
NOTES & TOPICS

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Islam & Secularity: the Turkish Model



ONE THING AT LEAST the candidates in the recent French presidential election cannot be reproached with: not having talked about Europe. What made them so right to do so was the fact that Europe will still be incomplete when the Twelve have formed their famous single internal market. For a thirteenth partner is knocking at the door, a country whose credentials—be they unknown, unappreciated, or falsified—we would all be well advised to examine. I refer, of course, to Turkey.

Turkey gets a bad press. Firstly, because of the Armenian genocide—an unpardonable crime, no doubt, but one that after all pre-dates the creation of the modern Turkish state in 1923. Secondly, because of a preference on the part of Europeans for Greece, with whom Turkey has an age-old quarrel. And, lastly, because of shortcomings on the scores of human rights and democracy. The latter, one is duty-bound to condemn; but one is also duty-bound not to forget that shortcomings on the score of democracy do at least reflect the fact that a real democratic framework exists in Turkey, which is not the case in any other country in the Islamic world. Of the 46 members of the "Organisation of Islamic Conference" only Turkey—and possibly Senegal—has a more or less democratic and parliamentary form of government, in which power can be regularly transferred through the medium of free and fair elections.

For years the Western media laid great stress on—and were justifiably severe about—the repression that followed the Army's seizure of power in Turkey in 1980. However, observers might (without necessarily condoning it) have gained a better understanding of the reasons behind the coup (and the spirit in which it was conducted) if equal stress had been laid on informing them about the situation that obtained before that military interlude, and the way in which it was resolved.

After 1973, dissolutions and elections followed one another in rapid succession. Left and Right—Ecevit and Demirel—made alternate attempts to govern, either alone or in coalition, but always failed. Terrorism of every sort became rampant, to the point where there were several outrages daily. Insecurity coexisted with martial law in virtually every province. The political destabilisation of this key link in the NATO chain drew a formidable economic crisis in its wake. When the mandate of the President of the Republic expired in April 1980, the parties were unable to agree over electing a successor. The state had ceased to exist. It was in this context that the military leadership seized power in November.

They very quickly withdrew, however; and from 1983 they increasingly moved aside in favour of civilians. Nothing excuses the brutality, the torture, the mammoth trials, and the blows struck against civil liberties. Yet the fact is that the majority of the population backed the Army (as a referendum in 1982 showed). Moreover, as soon as order had been restored and the economy straightened out, the return to democracy went ahead, with parliamentary elections being held in November 1983. Twice since 1950 (the date when a genuinely democratic system was established in Turkey) the Army had intervened in the political process: in 1960 and, again, in 1971. And on both occasions it had gone back to barracks of its own accord, once its objective—the restoration of stability—had been achieved.

Turkey's political destiny, already exceptional in this regard, appears even more so in the light of the fact that it is the only Muslim country in which the state is secular. The very notion of *laïcité*, secularity, whether in public affairs or in the civil code, is so alien to Islam that one is amazed at the clarity of vision and steadfastness of purpose with which, starting in 1923, Kemal Atatürk and his successors contrived to separate religion from the state.

Now, at last, French readers can gain a clearer understanding of this long historical transformation—amounting to a genuine revolution—with the appearance of a translation of that great and profound work by one of the finest Orientalists of our time: Bernard Lewis's account of the emergence of modern Turkey (the English language edition was published in 1961).[1]

THE NOTION OF secularity is the focal point of all the internal difficulties encountered by Islamic nations in trying to adapt to modernity and development. In Islamic culture we find no distinction between what is to be "rendered unto Caesar" and what is to be "rendered unto God"; a distinction that has been present since the birth of the Christian confrontation with civil society. Nor, Lewis tells us, do we find either in classical Arabic or in the languages that have borrowed their political vocabulary from it such (to us) familiar pairs of opposites as "church" and "state", "spiritual" and "temporal", "sacred" and "profane", "religious" and "secular". In a Christian country, even if there is a state religion, that religion does not govern all the activities either of the

[1] *Islam et laïcité, la naissance de la Turquie moderne.* By BERNARD LEWIS. Translated by PHILIPPE DELAMARE. Fayard.

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state or of individuals. At the height of the 17th century, under *Le Roi Très Chrétien*, Louis XIV, it is the *Code* to which Dandin and Chicanneau appeal in Racine's comedy *Les Plaideurs*, not to the Gospels. Translated into Islamic terms, they would appeal to Quranic law.

That is why present-day Islamic revolutionaries, for whom Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic republic currently furnishes the model, turn towards the cradle of Islam, towards the past, in order to reject the democratic world—at least its values and institutions, if not its technology. Conversely, the Turkish revolution and the Turkish republic were inspired by the Western connotations of those terms—notably their separation of the political and religious spheres, the Civil Code and divine law. Lacking a word to refer to secularity, Turkish "borrowed" one from French, the French *laïque* becoming the Turkish *lâyik*.

In Turkey, then, we have the Muslim nation that, without renouncing its religious traditions, has most clearly opted for Western values in politics, economics, and (just as importantly) civil matters, particularly as regards marriage and divorce. The essential change, for many Turks, has been at the level of civilisation, even more than at those of the economy, society, or the state. Closer in many respects to western Europe than to the Near East, as a member of NATO and of the Council of Europe, Turkey has already signed a partnership agreement with the Common Market. It is, in my view, thoroughly suited to becoming a full member. According to the calculations of the economist and demographer Jean-Claude Chesnais, in some 30 years, Turkey is set to have a larger population than Germany, Italy, and Spain combined. And if growth continues at the same rate as has marked the last 25 years, its economic power could, come 2025, be two-and-a-half times greater than that of West Germany today.

Turkey's orientation ought to interest us all the more for being in stark contrast to the growing hostility shown to us by the Islamic world in general since the rise of Muslim fundamentalism. (It is odd, incidentally, that we apply the epithet "revolutionary" to Khomeinist fundamentalism, that is to say to hatred of the modern world and the restoration of a fanatical theocracy, when that tendency is in the strictest etymological sense of the word "reactionary".) Turkey apart, the entire Muslim world currently exhibits an undeniable tendency to evolve in the direction of the past rather than the future, particularly in the Near and Middle East.

BUT ISN'T THE PHENOMENON actually political? The French Institute of International Relations (*IFRI*) asks the right question in its recent world report: "Islam today: religion or ideology?"[2]

The Iranians who ran amok in Mecca in 1987 were acting in response to political watchwords. It is difficult to see what they had to reproach Saudi Arabia with at the religious level. Their objection was to that country's diplomatic relations with America. They were certainly strange "pilgrims"—reminiscent, perhaps, of the muscular young German "tourists" who were suddenly seized in their thousands by a bucolic desire to roam the enchanting Austrian landscape on the eve of the *Anschluss*. What possible religious motives could have lain behind the attacks on the French and American embassies by the terrorists currently being held in Kuwait, even if the hijackers, who diverted the Kuwaiti airliner in an attempt to secure their release, did invoke the Quran?

The Islamic "packaging" of acts of political terrorism is simply an odious masquerade. The Montbrial study highlights this; the Islam that is spreading today is largely secularised and hardly reflects a spiritual revival. It is more a solace in the face of the threat represented by Western values. Yet there is no sign of any original effort to rethink Islam in the light of the requirements of modernisation, or with a view to meeting the challenge posed by the societies of the West by providing something equally effective.

This hankering after origins is in many cases a façade. In Islamic tradition, politics was subordinate to religion. In contemporary fundamentalism, religion serves to mask politics. In their speeches, the élites who lead the *mouvements intégristes* and manufacture their propaganda, blend Islamic fundamentalism with typical Third World radicalism. Their return to their sources gives rise not so much to creative inspiration as to a negative preoccupation with the past. This politicisation of Islam does not, of course, in any way rule out the religious sincerity of hundreds of millions of Muslims. It grafts onto popular piety an élitist, totalitarian ideology, nourished by a deep and violent animosity towards the West.

BUT TURKEY is an exception. Admittedly, for some years now it, too, has been shaken by *intégriste* currents in the twin forms of traditionalism (fostered by Saudi Arabia) and revolutionary radicalism (as fomented by Iran). But their capacity for action remains limited. Between 1973 and 1977 the National Salvation Party, the spearhead of militant Islam, saw its share of the poll fall from 11.8% to 8.6%; in 1987 its successor, the Prosperity Party, received only 7.1% of the vote. It comes as no surprise to learn that Iranian-inspired propaganda is most active among the emigrant community in West Germany and Berlin. In Turkey itself Islam now manifests greater energy than before, but the Turkish state remains firmly secular and there is nothing, in Professor Bernard Lewis's view, to suggest that there will be any re-establishment of Quranic law.

The reason is that the maintenance of the modern, secular, democratic nation-state is dictated by the consensus of the majority in favour of choosing Europe. Turkey's desire to join the EEC calls, by definition, for perseverance in this political course. Not only does Turkey's economic vitality make it a very much more interesting candidate for the Common Market than Greece was in 1975; its pro-Western options are very much more clear-cut than those of Athens. Andreas Papandreou has never missed an opportunity to come out against the Western democracies and dissociate himself from European stances, whether *vis-à-vis* the USSR

[2] *Ramsès 87-88*. Under the direction of THIERRY DE MONTBRIAL. Editions Atlas-Economica.

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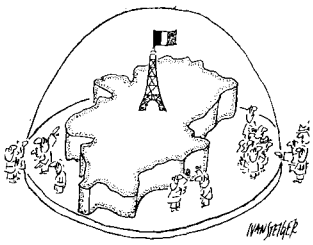
(over Poland, for example), Gaddafi, or international Terrorism.

A mere glance at the map suggests that Turkey is a turntable without which Europe's defence would be dangerously curtailed as far as its capacity for intervention is concerned, whether in the eastern Mediterranean or towards the Gulf. If we do not see that, we can be sure the USSR sees it very clearly.

But does Turkey constitute a singularity in the Islamic world? Could it possibly be a model for other Muslim nations? The question is worth asking at a time when the alternative model, the so-called "Iranian Revolution"—morally discredited, economically devastated, and militarily drained of the blood of hundreds of thousands of its children—is looking more like something to be avoided at all costs. Following the failures of Nasserism, of various Islamic "socialisms", and of Iranian fundamentalism, the Turkish approach looks far and away the most realistic and dignified way of attaining development and democracy. The danger for Turkey stems not so much from Muslim fundamentalism as from the possibility of Western incomprehension discouraging it from persevering in its sensible policy, and balking it of international benefits in its plucky bid for modernisation.

Le Style Mitterrand



THE stylistic pre-eminence of General de Gaulle laid heavy oratorical and literary obligations upon his successors. All those grand press conferences, at once ceremonies of language and political performances, the mordant brevity of his appeals at dramatic moments (Algeria), the travels punctuated by disconcerting *dicta* (Canada, Germany), and the vigorous television appearances which seized people's imaginations and lodged in their memory. Between them they furnished the political stage from 1958 to 1969, almost to the point of adding a tacit, but none the less binding article to the Constitution: *gouverner, c'est parler*, to govern is to speak.

To govern is also to write. Granted, French political history has never been short of either writers or orators. But the marriage of speech and action (I should say, the advent of *la parole-action*, the speech-act) that was so characteristic of de Gaulle, coupled with his success as a memoirist, fixed the new *persona* of the French head of state.

So how well does François Mitterrand embody that *persona*? Even discounting the excesses of adulation that our elected monarchs tend to arouse amongst their courtiers, all French observers are agreed on the subject of their President's gifts of expression. His love of (and instinctive feeling for) language, solidly grounded in a pre-War classical education, are beyond all doubt. Assurance, correctness, and naturalness are in his case deployed to possibly even greater effect in the spoken than in the written word. His success here is well merited, resting as it does on an intelligent reconversion. Mitterrand had gradually to adapt himself to the straightforward familiarity of tone required by the modern media. In the beginning, his school of oratory was in the tradition of parliamentary eloquence that dates from the 19th century and went out with the Fourth Republic—loud, intentionally declamatory voice, long periods, laboured effects, percussive emphasis, and plenty of crescendo. It is still an appropriate manner for French congresses and meetings, but it gave the Mitterrand of the 1960s a dreadfully bombastic television image. The skill with which he conducted his own metamorphosis shows the measure of his talent.

BUT IS TALENT the same thing as style? Having style means more than speaking and writing well. It is a cachet, a trade mark that is recognisable from a few lines, even when quoted anonymously. Despite his mania for making a pastiche of the classics, de Gaulle had a stamp that made even the most appalling commonplaces sound arresting on his lips.

I am not convinced that François Mitterrand, for all his undoubted ability, has quite that secret rhythm, that feeling for

The Colour of Justice

New York City

THE USE *of sociologists, psychologists and communications experts as trial consultants has grown sharply in the past decade, according to a spokesman for the American Society of Trial Consultants.*

These social scientists often help lawyers formulate questions to use in trials and jury-selection procedures in order to uncover hidden biases harboured by potential jurors, witnesses, opposing counsel, and even judges.

ARMED **with that knowledge, lawyers may exclude potentially hostile jurors or frame the interrogation of witnesses in a way more advantageous to their client.**

Some lawyers are troubled, however, by what they see as the proliferation of legal consultants, whose claims to scientific legitimacy are difficult to substantiate.

ONE *trial consultant is known in legal circles as "the colour guy" for his interpretive approach to the colour of potential jurors' clothing.*

Mr James Raiscot, who holds degrees in psychology and sociology, counsels clients that bright-coloured clothes generally are worn by people who crave attention and have a concern for other people. Therefore, they tend to be more favourably disposed toward the plaintiff in a civil lawsuit.

YELLOW, **he says, is a tip-off to a "more intellectual, fashion-conscious, free-thinker". Dark blue, on the other hand, is generally worn by a subtler, more introverted personality who does not care as much about other people and thus might be a better juror for the defence.**

Doron Levin
in the NEW YORK TIMES

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the original metaphor and the startling comparison that we call "*le style*". Furthermore—and this is typical of the man—speech with Mitterrand is very much less a preparation for action than it was with de Gaulle. He seems to speak not so much in order to say what he thinks as to avoid saying it, not so much to decide as to duck. He hates any over-precise form of words that might subsequently be quoted back at him. Hence his irritation on the eve of his declaring his candidature for the Presidency when a journalist asked him whether he intended to renationalise the enterprises that had been privatised; he was being put on the spot!

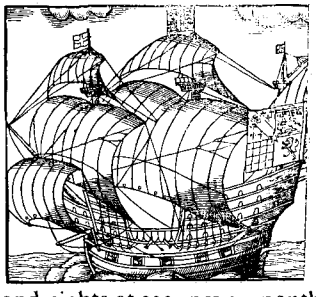
Mitterrand has tone more than style, and that may be because his ideas are never really his own. A man can be wholly sincere about embracing ideas he has not himself invented. But the way in which he expresses them can never have that taste of freshness that constitutes true style.

In controversy, it is when he is on the defensive that Mitterrand finds a sort of style at last—"his" style. It is basically adversarial. The role of drawing people together is one that ill becomes him; we have seen how he finds it difficult to sustain once he leaves the haven of silence. As a speaker he shines less in proposing than in opposing the motion. Similarly, in action he is less good in power than in the conquest of power. Or, as we have just seen, the reconquest of power.

J.-F.R.

Into Deeper Waters

By Wayland Kennet



I DON'T KNOW ABOUT acquired characteristics, but imagery I do think can be inherited. Seagoing ancestors over two centuries have given me a layer of enjoyable shudders which comes into play at certain images, going far beyond my own seafaring. I have only spent days and nights at sea, never months, and always in the cold, grey, narrow seas. But when I come on a sentence like this, my shudder-layer comes into play:

> "And then out in the tropics, riding the bowsprit, the sails slack and the white bow wave cutting the dark sea; or up aloft on a pitching yard arm, with green water smashing over the deck. . . ."

Not great stuff—why was the white bow wave cutting the dark sea if the sails were slack?—but enough to trigger my atavism and enough for me to know my stock.

I was a boy in the 1930s, and saw the last of the grain ships come into Falmouth Harbour. I imagined sailing out to the Vilt Buoy in one of those—yards like a boiler and masts like a tube tunnel: a far cry from my dinghy. I looked at illustrated books called *Under Canvas* and *White Sails, White Wings*. I also read Arthur Ransome's *Peter Duck*.

At twelve, I had a tooth removed under gas and returned to consciousness with my ears roaring from the eternal wind in the rigging and the sound of the hull surging through the clear sea, knowing that the riddle of the universe itself had been made plain to me. I told the dentist, who wasn't much interested. That afternoon I told my mother, who asked what the answer had been. I said I thought it had been a ship: a ship under full sail. This was the truth, the main truth, of life. As I said it, I realised it couldn't be; the ship must have been standing for something else. I wondered what.

Still twelve, I went sailing on Lake Windermere with Arthur Ransome. He told me that he found it difficult writing for children because he didn't really like them. I didn't know whether to be put off generically, or flattered individually because he had chosen me for such a terrible confession. When the slapping of the ripples began under his *Swallow*'s stem, he exclaimed: "That's the best sound in the world." I thought: I hear that all the time with my dinghy. What I need to know is, what's that great roar like?

Since then, I have edged slightly up the tonnage table in sailing ships. I went to sea, real sea, at fourteen, out of Lowestoft in a boat big enough to produce good creaking—which could have been the prelude to roaring—from the jaws of its old wooden gaff in rolling weather. In the War, I got my bellyful of the cold and grey, but that was under power, and the only roar was that of internal combustion from the aircraft engines we used, not the natural roar of sail and water. Then in peacetime (I was in my early twenties), I was invited to race with a rich man from England to France in quite a big yacht. I was alone on deck at the helm in the middle watch (3 a.m., lubbers). There was not much wind, certainly no roar, and I dismasted her. They told me I was not to blame, and indeed I did not see how I could have been: I had merely shortened in on a reach under full sail in a Force 5 wind. They were kind, but that misadventure made more of a break than going to sea to kill men ever had. I, myself, inescapable me, had dismasted a ship. I had lost my innocence, and become disjointed from the answer to the riddle of the universe. I was not invited again.

THE IMAGE REMAINED. Later, I sailed smaller yachts, sometimes in adverse circumstances, sometimes rejoicing at a landfall and a good entry into a river with a bone in her teeth and a glass of rum in my hand. I suffered the indignity of spending a whole tide on a sandbank while the world became diagonal and the chine pounded and I felt it was my very soul—no, body—pounding on that bank. Error and wreck; error and wreck. The boat's bottom was unharmed and so was mine. Danger had no bright eyes for me; I was after some symbol or other.

Four of my five fathers in direct line, two of my uncles, my mother's first husband, my father-in-law, countless cousins, and I, were all sailors. My wife was a WREN. The blood I got

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was brine, though my own hands were only moderately tarry. This is a common lot in modern England. Shall we admit some osmosis from "blood", to use the old word, to the image-forming or image-accepting machinery in the brain? Shall we imagine, even, that the first search of a child for life's meaning should have found the nearest briny image to hand, so that he felt: that's it, I've been given it? We might; and if we did, the old child should now go further. What did it stand for? What was the reality I intuited that afternoon when, swollen-gummed, I sat with my mother by the fire?

A FEW YEARS AGO I saw an interesting list of the writers whose books were, then, most borrowed from public libraries. It was quite different from the best-seller list; many times more books are borrowed than bought. Readership is borrowership, as society belatedly recognised when the government allowed Authors Lending Rights. The people on that list were the real nourishers of our collective imagination. Of the top story-tellers in that year, a notable majority had been sailors or married to sailors. It's not surprising; to write well, one has to spend a great deal of time working alone, away from congenial company, and this is hard to do without some help from circumstance.

Chief among the writers of our age who were formed at sea, the heir of Raleigh and Melville and everybody in Hakluyt, is William Golding. He is a man for the tell-all turn of phrase, the *magnum in parvo*, the burning focus of the colloquial glass.

In *Close Quarters*[1] the young hero, much in love with the girl—the first lovable girl in Golding's writing—whom he meets when two English ships of the Napoleonic wars make fast to one another on the high sea, parts from her when the ships part; then dreams. The dream is in nautical talk: "tarpaulin" as the hero calls it. It is made up of old naval terms and orders, and its force comes from their slight distortion; they are off-key, wrong. He sees her ship again, dismasted. There has been a disaster. The sails lie down upon the sea like clothing in the bright sunlight. "Stun the royals!" comes the order. ("Strike the royals and stunsails" would be the waking order.) And then the order of the day itself, the order of the month, of the life, of life: "*Lie all down handsomely together*!" These are the words of order and of love themselves, joined as we have to learn to join them if we are to make it as a human people.

Now, we rage furiously together in nations. Whether it is possible to "lie all down together" in order and in love without ever having fallen down in knowledge of our Maker, I do not know. At present, all I know is that some roar from the dangerous and helpful sea, first heard before I had ever been on it and never since unheard, tells me that it may not be possible. If it is not, if we must know our Maker in order to love, we need not be constrained by the diverse particularities of imagery which surround the fact of Makership. We do not have to salute God, the Father on the Christian quarterdeck—there are many quarterdecks. All men and women are made by this, or, alternatively, by that: by another God, or Gods, or Forces, or Particles, or Chance. Ask them. Some are even made by images. All those who know that they were made, know what they were made by.

Certainly, we live in a new age of dogmatic fanaticism, when once again, because so many people hear their own Maker telling them to murder those who they suppose have other Makers, we must go around in fear. But this necessary fear may blind us to the danger from another quarter, from the colourless uncreated, the living dead of the modern world, who hear nothing. Those who believe that their own being is all the making they ever had, and acknowledge no origin; they, too, must be feared. They, too, may unmake us, and perhaps in larger numbers. They feel they made themselves, and from there it is a short step till they believe they may unmake other people. Since their own existence is a puzzle to them, how should they know their duty to accept that of others? Between the *hashishim* and the relativists, the channel is narrow.

[1] *Close Quarters*. By WILLIAM GOLDING. Faber, £8.95, paper £2.50.

Prisoner

Once, my body made me free, gave
legs, hands, eyes as tools for what is me
to operate upon the world, to brave

the going out of what I meant to be.
But now my body's turned into a jail
makes prisoner of the I that should be free—

imposes its conclusions, tells its own tale.
Inside, I want to argue, to convince this shell
that shells go where directed by the snail.

I sense my body's winning. Time will tell.

Alan Harris

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Roots of Madness

G. K. Chesterton on the 20th Century—

By James McNamara & Dennis O'Keeffe

"Smile at us, pay us, pass us; but do not quite forget. For we are the people of England, that never have spoken yet." **G. K. Chesterton,** *The Secret People*

HALF A CENTURY AGO, in a BBC talk delivered shortly before his death, G. K. Chesterton took a final swipe at the modern world he had cherished, drawn a sword against, but ultimately failed to influence much:

> "I have collected a number of most interesting twentieth-century books, claiming to declare a twentieth-century philosophy; they really have a common quality; but I rather hesitate to define it. Suppose I said that the main mark of the twentieth century in ethics, as in economics, is bankruptcy."[1]

He thought some of the books brilliant, but in a useless sort of way; indeed for him they were quite shot through with a sense of "brilliant futility". It is interesting to speculate on what he meant, and it would be fascinating to see that reading list. In any case the sentiment is all a piece with what we already know about the man. He probably had three things in mind: first, that all those huge programmes for social transformation which are associated with the 1930s would fail; second, that economics, despite its pretensions, could give only secondary answers to primary doubts of another kind; and, finally, that society would be redeemed, if at all, only from a direction quite different from any conceived by radical ethics.

A question worth asking now is what he might have made of the latter end of the same 20th century. Would he detect at the heart of our debates the same futile cleverness and empty moralising? Certainly, our own social programmes very often lack even the self-confidence which characterised the earlier ones. Primary doubt stalks the land. And this is not, *pace* the Bomb-culturists, because we all fear being blown up. Nor are intelligent people really misled by the synthetic cant about resources running out. They are not.[2]

The West is affluent enough even to help the world's poor; and only obscurantists could think our class-wars comparable to those of the past. No, what we are going through feels much more like a collective spiritual disorder, an unstable compound of loss and fantasy. Chesterton could prove a reliable guide to such a mentality. Remember that this was the writer who predicted that the 20th century, so far from practising the humane scepticism it prided itself on, would eventually relapse into a baroque credulity

INTELLECTUALLY REMAINDERED for many years, Chesterton has lately been brought back to public attention.[3] Yet even in the revised version he still tends to appear as just a good-natured controversialist, a jolly Fleet Street drinker, a larger-than-life Romance man, another jingle poet. On the other hand, religious conservatism has him as *defensor fidelis* on the Clapham omnibus. Lighter sketches make him very fat and absent-minded; but a formidable wielder of paradox, a humorist, something of a cross between Mr Pickwick and Samuel Johnson.

What is still missing from the account, despite more serious studies of recent years, is an assessment of his achievement as a social theorist.[4] However, it should not be too difficult to devise a preliminary check-list. In the first place, Chesterton was clearly a consistent political rationalist; he never doubted the capacity of reason to control the darker, anarchic forces of human nature. In his novels, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904) and *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), as well as in

[1] Quoted in Maisie Ward, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton* (Penguin, 1958), p. 394.

[2] See Paul Johnson, *Enemies of Society* (1978).

[3] See *G. K. Chesterton*. By MICHAEL FFINCH. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £7.95; *The Innocence of Father Brown*. Annotated and edited by MARTIN GARDNER. Oxford University Press, £4.95; and reissued in paperback, *Collected Nonsense and Light Verse*. By G. K. CHESTERTON. Methuen, £4.95.

[4] Happily, this gap is about to be filled in a forthcoming book on Chesterton by Ian Crowther to be published by the Claridge Press in their Anti-Modern Masters series.

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the *Father Brown Stories* (1911-1935), much of the enjoyment proceeds from the way he sets the powers of rationality and irrationality at each other's throats. Yet while he usually extolls the victory of reason, there is always a counterbalancing effect, an emphasis upon something he considered even more vital: the infallible common sense of the common man. Beyond this again is a quality seldom remarked about Chesterton's work. Circulating somewhere inside the great cloak of romance there is an uncompromising, even an austere sense of reality. (Jorge Luis Borges once claimed that Chesterton was the only external influence on his own style of fantastic realism.) Since, moreover, he tended to invest everything he wrote with the force of religious conviction, as a theorist he can only be securely placed within a tradition of Christian Realism.

THIS OUTLOOK lay at the root of his quarrel with the moderns. It separated him sharply from the sundry programmes for social reform which were under rehearsal in the Late Victorian world: Nietzsche and the Transvaluation of all Values; H. G. Wells and the Scientific Utopia; the vegetarian socialism of George Bernard Shaw. All these were irrational for Chesterton. The full list of offenders can be found in a very Chestertonian syllabus of errors entitled *Heretics* (1905) which, quite apart from its serious purpose, remains a very amusing polemic:

> "It is not as though nobody before Nietzsche had thought of such things (as the Life-Force); it is simply that they did not consider them worth mentioning."

Good natured as he might have been, there is no doubt that Chesterton's cast of mind was combative. All his essays reveal an eye as sharp as Orwell's for hypocrisy and contradiction:

> "Somebody has sent me a volume on companionate marriage, so called because the people involved are not married and will very rapidly cease to be companions."[5]

Chesterton fiercely opposed the respectable disguises sought by those given to "railing against respectability". A posterity which has virtually abolished the notion of sexual morality can only stumble over his withering reflections on that gross oxymoron, "free love". He took it quite for granted that love is a pact, a bond—and therefore *cannot* be free. Free love really means casual sexual indulgence. For Chesterton it was part of a growing "anarchy of ethics . . . a refusal of people to say what they mean".

But it was not to expose the misuse of language that Chesterton entered the lists against his contemporaries. The single aim which unifies everything he attempted came from the conviction that the 20th century had lost its head. In *Orthodoxy* (1908), he declared that its intellectuals all too often resembled the lunatic, confined to the ghastly, sunlit cell of a single explanatory idea. They flattered themselves on their generosity of mind, when actually they behaved like narrow obsessives.

[5] G. K. Chesterton, "On Evil Euphemisms", *Selected Essays* (Collins, 1933), p. 225.

Combating child labour

by A. Bequele and J. Boyden

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He was not far out in this assessment. Nietzsche was off his head in his last years, and poor old Wells entitled his last book *Mind at the End of its Tether*. Shaw tottered on into his nineties getting crankier and crankier, eventually making up his own "universal" alphabet. Chesterton would not have rejoiced in any of this; but it is true that most of the influential social prophets of this era began well and ended badly. One of the last to go was Aldous Huxley, who stood giggling on his Californian lawn in a mescalin trance, as his house and library went up in flames. It all reads like a terrible comment on the anti-social intellect at full stretch. Today their descendants are around in considerable numbers, the fanatics of "single-issue" politics, whose combined effect is to tear apart those great, if elusive assumptions—Chesterton called them "Orthodoxy"—which bind society together.

If we reread Chesterton today it is because he was the fiercest early critic of an Act whose closing scenes we are now apprehensively witnessing. The oeuvre is, of course, enormous; yet Chesterton's interests remain topical. On at least three subjects what he had to say has lost none of its freshness. What is remarkable is that his theoretical concern ranged far enough to embrace them all: politics, economics and ethics.

Politics and Madness

"THE MAIN TRUTH about this sceptical revolt . . . is that it was born in a world of fictions. It came from the intelligentsia."[6] In two books which flanked the Great War, *What's Wrong with the World* (1910) and *The Outline of Sanity* (1926), Chesterton advised intellectuals that one way of promoting social disorder was to proceed logically from insane premises. He was on the side of those who believe that it is crazy ideas, not changes in the modes of production, which cause crises. There is a lot to be said for this view. Since his day many fantastical monsters of contradiction have been thrown up "from the green hells of the sea".

Today, both in Great Britain and the United States, a strident cult is to be heard preaching that although psychological differences between men and women don't exist in nature we should, nevertheless, declare female superiority or homosexual hegemony, or both. Further up the road, one of its conceptual brethren contends that varying intelligence quotients between races boil down to cultural stereotyping. It is currently mutilating language and literature in favour of its own egalitarian stereotype.

Institutions themselves can go rogue. The fanatical anti-smoking campaign waged by our own British Medical Association, sits oddly next to its approval of the current scale of abortions. It requires a two-faced definition of "health". Bishops, so far from trying to arrest the general slide into irrationality, join in enthusiastically. If Judas were around today he might well be rewarded with a diocese for his services to inner-city Jerusalem. The other eleven would be sent off in disgrace for propagating out-of-date dogma.

Chesterton had cracked the secret of this folly even before it had properly got going. He was one of the first to identify a new intellectual class and the emergence of a quasi-omniscient "expertocracy" (our term). He thought of it as an army without an enemy billetted on the people. In his last years its most insolent exponents, such as Karl Mannheim, were already calling themselves a "disinterested élite".[7] Today, their Olympian pretensions are the very gospel of the public-sector missionaries and of their scribes and publicists.

When this gospel was first formulated in *Ideology and Utopia* it took the form of a severe Platonic Marxism. The workers were clearly not up to running the democratic utopia; philosophers would do it for them. Thus the New Social State was, from the outset, in the gift of broker-intellectuals and political mandarins.

Chesterton was not alone, of course, in seeing clearly what was happening. Indeed, Bakunin had recognised that even in its original proletarian guise the new state was a swindle, the pretentious cover for yet another parasitic class.[8] Machajski had further developed this thesis at the turn of the century.[9] We do not know whether he had read any of this, of course, but Chesterton's was a notable voice in a literature which warned about the threat to ordinary decency inherent in the implacable character of octopoid government.

THIS NEW CLASS often formally upheld (and upholds) the nationalisation of property; its real interest has always been in the socialisation of mind. *What's Wrong with the World* pictures your average British working man, "Jones", receiving attention from successive waves of reformers anxious to drop him into this or that New Jerusalem. The book's true originality lies in its grasp that declarations of democratic love overlay a desire for intellectual tyranny.

The expertocracy might fool themselves that they liberated Jones with their council-housing and mass education. Actually, they were rendering him homeless, indigent and conformist. Could even Chesterton have anticipated the opportunities for bureaucratic bullying offered by the immigration of millions of black Jones's, or that the 1970s would double the category of the "exploited" by the statistical addition of a vast new sub-class of female? What it has all amounted to is a sociological manoeuvre. Even though the absolute population of a country may be growing only by slow arithmetic, the ranks of the exploited can increase geometrically. And thus the madness proceeds. Everyone belongs somewhere in the great chain of exploitation. No one needs

[6] G. K. Chesterton, *The Thing* (1929), p. 60.

[7] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (1954). This book, which played a seminal role in the modern sociology of knowledge—Mannheim held the first chair in the Sociology of Education at the University of London's Institute of Education—encapsulated the claims of contemporary "socialist expertise". The original German version appeared in 1929.

[8] Michael Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (Revisionist Press, 1976).

[9] In a series of writings between 1898 and 1911, the Polish scholar Jan Waclaw Machajski developed the thesis that Russian socialism was the product of a new and utterly ruthless class of intellectuals who would usher in a definitive system of exploitation. For a splendid account see Marshall Shatz, "Jan Waclaw Machajski" (*Survey*, January, 1967).

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to be left out. Above all, the theory can never be disproved.[10]

Back in the 1930s, Chesterton realised that traditional restraints were still half in place, still impeding the full logic of the programme. Even then the Bloomsbury design for universal inflation and ubiquitous welfare conscripton was well under way. Since then, the planners and behaviour-modifiers have staked out a broader constituency. The beast which, since the last war, has slouched towards Westminster, has called up a veritable army to its rear. It has taken over university and polytechnic social administration departments; it has penetrated teaching and teacher-training courses; it sits comfortably in the media; and it is all out to capture local government. What, for instance, was Ken Livingstone doing for half a decade but claiming to know the greatest good for the greatest number of Londoners? "Militant", the name for one of the sharp ends of the tendency, wanted to plunge everyone into the best of all possible Liverpools. But all our political parties are infected by it, and the "centre" of the political system is dominated by it.

In the 1960s the intelligentsia added another twist. The desire for liberty must break out somewhere. So what they did effectively was to privatise sexual morality while continuing to add layer upon layer to their administered economy. You could do what you liked—providing you stayed somewhere inside the welfarist web of administration. Jones was to be allowed to take full advantage of a climate of permissiveness. Notice that "permissive": the expertocracy "permits" these dissolutions.

Chesterton predicted this development too. He foresaw the beginnings of a future servile state based on boundless licence at the personal level and an authoritarian closing of all other political options. He knew that the ancient slave states often encouraged promiscuity amongst the slaves, the better to control them. The new servile state would come to

> ". . . settle down into the sleepy resignation of the old pagan repose in slavery. . . ."[11]

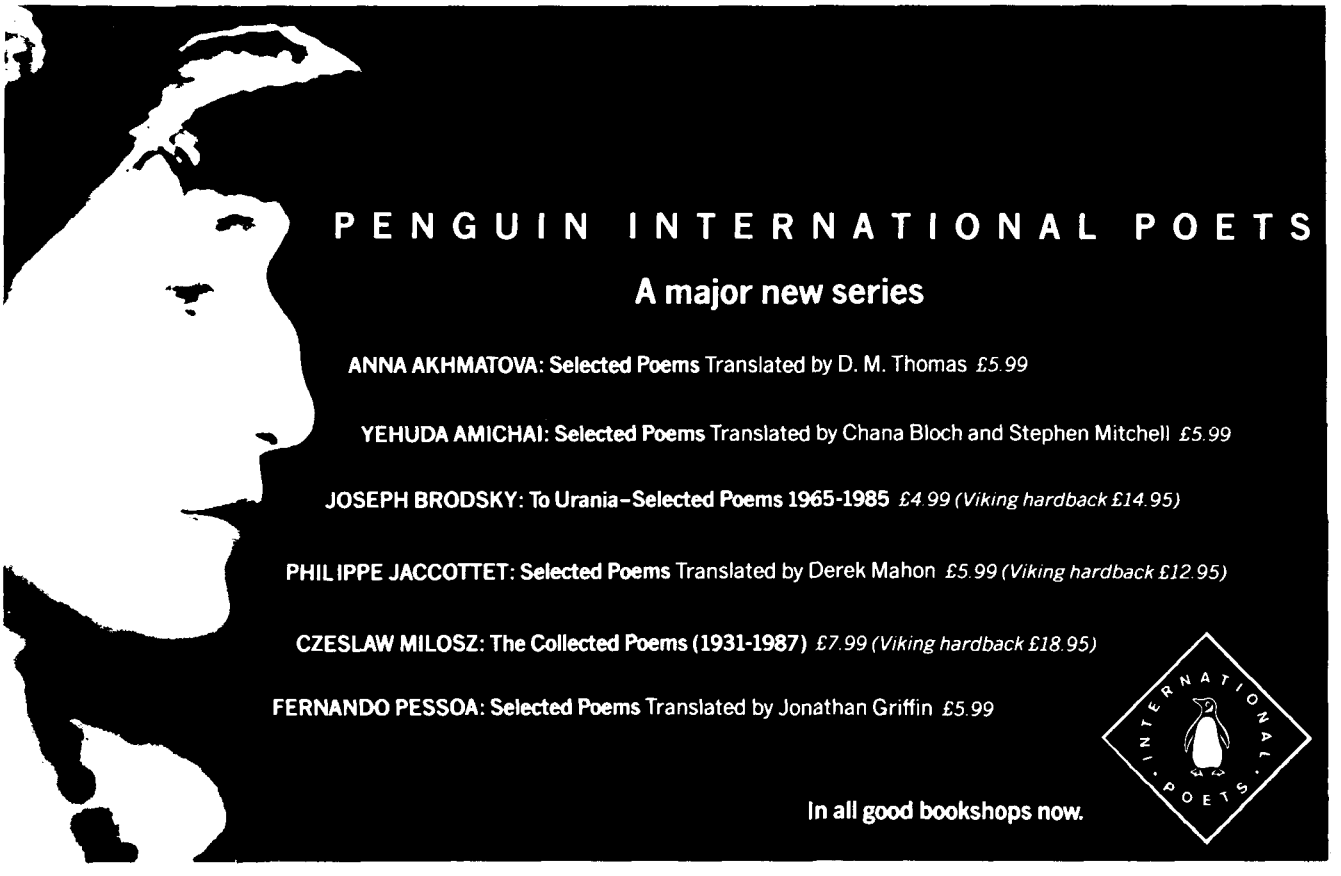
Before that could happen, he feared that we might all have to go through some kind of apocalyptic collapse. Who today can doubt that the Derek Hattons, Frances Morrells, and Bernie Grants, have been doing their best to oblige?

[10] The new sub-Marxist and sub-Freudian movements against multifaceted "oppression" and "repression" are proof against the Popperian-style critiques we have been wont to direct against *classical* Marxism and Freudianism. These new movements are not interested in scientific respectability. Their aim is moral and psychological pre-emption. It is their very emptiness, intellectually, which lends them appeal in some quarters.

[11] Chesterton, "The Sentimentalism of Divorce", in *Selected Essays*, p. 195.

Popular Capitalism

CHESTERTON's own bulwark against tyranny and possible social breakdown was an unfashionable one: popular capitalism. He had first begun to work towards this idea in the 1890s, but after his meeting with Hilaire Belloc in 1900, it developed into a fully fledged theory. He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became, with his brother Cecil and his alter ego, Belloc, a leading proponent of "Distributism". They founded a newspaper, *G. K.'s Weekly*, and later (really his brother's brainchild), a political organisation, "The Distributist League", to publicise their aims. The two most famous texts, both by Belloc, were *The Servile State* (1911) and *An Essay on the Restoration of Property* (1936).

Distributism was a half-way house between the other economic systems. It was hostile to socialism but also opposed plutocracy and corporate business. Its main enthusiasm was for small enterprises and for this reason it quickly ran into difficulties. In the first place this enthusiasm is antithetical to the Marxist excoriation of the *petit bourgeois* (a hatred, incidentally, that lives on in the new social state, which relentlessly harries restauranteurs and shopkeepers). On the other hand, Distributism is also tangential to the Keynesian tradition which, although it contains large chunks of microeconomics, simply does not place market-supply questions much to the fore. So, on these two horns it was impaled. It could not engage with the rise of big business and it could not address the prevailing dichotomy of labour and capital.

IN OUR OWN PERIOD, however, the picture has changed again. The American experience has reinstated the small business both theoretically and practically.[12] Moreover, Chesterton's idea has re-surfaced under other names. It is not a million miles from Schumacher's "Intermediate Technology",[13] nor from modern conservative versions of Samuel Smiles. As a working hypothesis, we would argue, it might have altered the population exodus from Ireland; and in many African countries something like it is the only realistic way forward. Popular capitalism of the type it envisages is simply private property in action.

Like much of Chesterton's intellectual stock it was prematurely remaindered. In this case, the main reason was obviously that industrial societies depended for their growth and survival upon large-scale organisation. But if modern democracies have learnt anything, it is surely that all forms of political economy are precarious. The point about Distributism is that it made personal property crucial for the control of the state.[14] Its intention was to impose limitations on the reign of the intellectuals. Compare it to the, historically, far more popular Marxist version of political economy, which piles starvation upon poverty and tyranny with unfailing regularity, and it begins to look like a respectable contender for reappraisal.

This time around we should transcend the "two-acres-and-a-cow" level of debate and look at its wider implications. Nowhere do Chesterton and Belloc argue that property *per se* could guarantee a civilised order; what they were positive about was that it was an indispensable ground-level defence for other more basic social institutions—in particular the traditional family. They noticed two interesting aspects of this small, versatile organisation: it is the primary site for the socialisation of mind; and it is the chief mediator between the private and the public realms. No wonder reformers from Engels onwards have taken such a subversive interest in it.[15]

The family is a robust unit and can survive. But the area in which it is most vulnerable, the point where it shows its most public face, is education. Because they realised this, the Distributists argued that schools, even when the state ran them, were theoretically an extension of personal property vested in the family. This is a surprisingly "modern" view entailing, as it does, the idea that education is not separate from, but *part* of the economy. Thus a deceptively simple economic theory enters one of the most hotly contended issues of our day—who should control Education.

Chesterton left us in no doubt where he stood. He thought that education policy was too important to be left to the educators. He writes, he tells us in *The Outline of Sanity*, as a democrat: "We have had enough education for the people; we want education by the people." (This anticipates by 60 years Kenneth Baker's desire to bring the people into education.)

History, it must be said, has let down the Distributist plea for family discretion in the school-system very badly. It is true that because the system is decentralised, what is the case in one area may not be in another. It is also true that the fee-paying sector is, to some degree, obliged to turn out a product more or less in accord with parental expectations. But when we turn to the part administered by the social state, there we find most of Chesterton's worst fears confirmed. Indeed, it seems all too probable that the comic horror of today's worst schools goes beyond anything he could have imagined.

THIS IS NOT THE PLACE to rehearse the catalogue of abuses which we see daily in the tabloid press. It is rather a question of how they could come to pass. The fact is that Education in liberal societies has a strange political and socio-economy which has still not been adequately theorised. It is a nationalised endeavour in which practitioner competence has generally been assumed. This has a satisfactory outcome so long as practitioners share that common sense of the common man which Chesterton so admired.

Unfortunately, many of them now do not. Under cover of the liberal rules they have smuggled into classroom practice, material not only extraneous to the learning process but deliberately aimed at subverting inherited values. Some of the propositions currently being aired as indisputable truths, such as "all cultures are equal", or "only white people can be racist", are in fact political incantations drawn from the wilder margins of opinion. Yet activists teach them as matters of fact in ordinary boroughs of London, those locales which Chesterton once fondly believed impervious to tyrants.

If there is any lesson it is that the latest crop of "deep thinkers", having been recently excluded from the commanding

[12] George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (Buchan and Enright, 1982).

[13] E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful* (1973).

[14] One of the main themes in Milton Friedman's superlative *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962).

[15] Welfarists today have tended to favour sexual promiscuity and easy divorce, a high incidence of which means more single-parent families: a natural constituency for the welfare-expertocracy.

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heights of the polity, attack society and economy in the most vulnerable areas. The schools are an irresistible target for them. Their disciples have flocked into education, bent on destroying the consensus indispensable to electoral democracy and capitalist economy.

Besides the structural peculiarity of the enterprise and its decentralised reliance on a good will now often not forthcoming, there is another factor which helps to explain why such abuses of parental trust were ever tolerated. Its origins lie in the universalist status given to Education by previous generations of reformers. The intention, doubtless, was admirable; but again it assumed a certain level of practitioner modesty.

One of its worst effects has been to encourage some teachers to think of themselves as an autonomous priesthood, valiantly catechising the young in a wicked capitalist world. This explains their reluctance to submit professional standards to independent scrutiny. First they inflate their proper role and then object to angry parents who expect less of them. The result is a wholly false picture of what schools are supposed to be doing. The idea of transmitting knowledge and discipline from one generation to the next, is lost in debates about alternative curricula, and self-important union activity.

Even if it were not corrupted, the school could not bear the weight that the 20th century has put upon it. It is a bit like sex in this respect. Once severed from the great continuities of family life and work, once made effectively into a thing-in-itself, it can scarcely satisfy all the high-level pressures upon it. Like the new social state, it was the creature of intellectuals and reflects their belief that the spread of general enlightenment would give us all the answers. It was left to Chesterton to put the awkward question: "How can we give what we have not got?" he asked in *What's Wrong with the World*. His words ruthlessly puncture the subsequent claims of a near century of socialist pseudo-expertise:

> "To hear some people talk one would think education was a sort of magic chemistry, by which we can produce something splendid by accident, we can create what we cannot conceive."

So the pursuit of "knowledge" as a social panacea was just one more example of the unbalanced modern mentality. It was precisely a sense of balance that he hoped to restore with his own theory.

Chesterton's Ethical and Religious Politics

CHESTERTON ANALYSED the imbalance of the secular state in much the same way as more recent contemporaries. He was distinctive, however, for associating the recovery of stability with the recovery of a full idea of human nature. Like many others in the Victorian *fin-de-siecle* period, he was haunted by the possibility of a coming war between the dark and light sides of humanity. But he was no Manichean. In his youth the field was divided between those who labelled themselves either "Pessimists" or "Optimists" about mankind's 20th-century destiny, between those who with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche predicted vast, dark social upheavals, and the more sanguine progressives, the evolutionists and the socialists who thought everything would get better and better.

All these proclamations of new dawns amidst gathering sunsets left their mark on Chesterton. He felt both were wrong. The urge to resolve glaring antitheses became the chief tension in what he came to call "The Great Adventure" of thought. The resolution of that tension occupied the period between the publication of *Orthodoxy* in 1908 and *The Everlasting Man* in 1925.

Unlike the Hegelians, Chesterton never believed that contraries like dark and light, could be reconciled within the artifices of dialectical logic. In *St Thomas Aquinas* (1933), he ridicules Hegelian and Buddhist logic. It was here that his noted penchant for paradox came into full play. Just as in a vision, paradoxes present the intellect with contradictions which are not self-cancelling, the integrity of what is glimpsed embracing apparent absurdity, so Chesterton learned the efficacy of paradox from the Old Testament. In *Orthodoxy*, he wrote:

> "If Moses had said God was infinite energy, I should be certain he had seen nothing extraordinary. As he said he was a burning bush, I think it very likely that he did see something extraordinary. . . . When the learned sceptic says: 'The visions of the Old Testament are local, rustic, and grotesque', we shall answer: 'Of course, they were genuine.'"

'The ignorance and complacency of most contemporary Conservatives about defence results partly from the changed social composition of the party and partly from an unearned sense of superiority... Far from sailing in the vanguard of history, Thatcher's ship of state is listing in its wake.'

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He went on to use paradox as a weapon in his one-man quarrel with the moderns. They had simply failed to grasp, he asserted, the extent to which the relation of man to society was in essence paradoxical.

The most complete statement of his position is to be found in *The Everlasting Man*. Here, Chesterton strives to produce an argument large enough to encounter both the light and dark sides of human nature. The essence of his position is that however necessary the separation of Church and State, politics, considered either as an activity or a discipline, cannot for long be coherently separated from ethics and religion. And he discovered a way of sabotaging both optimism and pessimism. *Homo sapiens*, he declared, against the evolutionists, was utterly distinct from all other creation. Hence, the human future could not be read materially out of a socially improving text. But neither, he affirmed, in the teeth of Nietzschean eschatologists, does the radical discontinuity of human nature forecast inevitable social wars, out of which the Life Force would contrive a new species. Man was *already* unique.

HIS CONTRADICTION was that he didn't quite fit into the world, not even the social worlds he variously designed for himself. That was why he kept changing them all the time. No mere political structure could contain both the light and dark sides of such a paradoxical creature for long. Thus all purely natural or sociological explanations of the human phenomenon were bound to be unbalanced.

Chesterton, indeed, was of the same party as the book of *Ecclesiastes*, which holds that politics on its own is vanity. He reverts in *The Everlasting Man* to a position he had originally outlined 20 years before in *Orthodoxy*, that the only satisfactory explanation for human nature lay in the doctrine of original Creation and the Fall. Light and dark together: Chesterton's view belongs to Judaeo-Christian realism.

> "I had been blundering about since my birth with two huge and unmanageable machines, of different shapes and without apparent connection—the world and the Christian tradition."

He speaks of a satisfying click of relief when, once two parts of the two machines had come together in his mind, man and society suddenly shot into focus.

The interesting thing is that unlike other traditionalists who argued from an hypothesis of original sin, Chesterton was not moved towards any authoritarian scheme for social regeneration. On the contrary, in *The Everlasting Man* he bases a theory of democracy directly upon mankind's flawed condition. He takes his stand somewhere between Aristotle and Plato. Man, located within the compass of nature, nevertheless seeks original perfection. To this contingent striving we give the name "liberty". Christian democracy is nothing more than the necessary social structure required to protect liberty.

Chesterton was not alone, of course, in reaching this conclusion. In *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1977), Henri Bergson had discerned an underlying transcendental dimension in modern secular politics. "Society", he wrote, "is a machine for the production of Gods"; a conceit which finds an echo today in the work of the sociologist Peter Berger. His *A Rumour of Angels* (1970), visualises society as one of the divine gifts for the redemption of the human spirit. Jacques Maritain in *Democracy and Christianity* (1945) made a neo-Thomist connection with the same post-modernist perspective. He argued that the secular idea of democracy and the Christian idea of human nature had been tragically splintered off from each other in the early modern period, and that until they were married up again, the secular theory would fail both as theory and practice. Even a heterodox thinker like Arthur Koestler tried, in *Dialogue with Death* (1961), to articulate the idea of human distinctiveness in a religious context: "Pilate did not say 'ecce vir', he said, 'ecce homo'." What they were all after, and Chesterton very specifically, was a politics which did full justice to Man's unpredictable individuality.

Contemporary pagans, from Nietzsche onwards, have revolted against the elevation of Christianity to the centre of our political telos. In his day, Chesterton's theoretical enemies didn't consist entirely of reformers drawn from the new intellectual class. There were others who refused to use original sin as an explanatory variable for our human mess. Indeed, many of these blamed Christianity for helping to create it. It was the "Pale Galilean" with his inappropriate mercy for the human condition, who was holding back our proud self-sufficiency. Writers such as Yeats and Lawrence went about preaching a virile romanticism made out of ancient mythologies. At the time, some of this looked very attractive, although nobody ever pretended it was particularly democratic in inspiration. In the end it grew demonic and slid swiftly into barbed wire. Neo-Paganism subsequently lost interest in politics and has returned to the Arts which spawned it in the first place.

The refined barbarism of the paganising notion of human liberty is a long way from Chesterton. The wealth and potential of individuality would not be released, according to his view, simply by our lifting the hatch on traditional restraints. The feature of Christian theology which attracted him was its dogmatic insistence that God was personal and intended Man for a great destiny. It was dogma, therefore, which exactly fitted, "like a sort of hard spike", into the hole in the social world. It resolved the human paradox without cancelling its difficulties. For, clearly, the creation of real liberty by Christianity out of democracy was likely to be a fairly lengthy and fraught process.

The advantage of the dogma was only that armed with its orthodoxy, man was at least better placed to understand what was happening to him, and so more able to cope with his future. Perhaps he would be able to see through the potential tyranny in certain huge social programmes more quickly, to detect the intellectual trickery in certain dogmatic copies of real salvation, which new gaolers of the human spirit might seek to employ against him.

Whatever we might think of it, Chesterton's theory of society attempts a full statement of the idea of liberty as an adventure with long term consequences. In the end, for him, religion and politics, although in many ways contradictory, not only required each other; they were inextricably linked. In *What I Saw in America* (1922), he wrote:

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"There is no basis for democracy except in a dogma about the divine origin of Man."

The central grandeur of this vision, arrived at without benefit of clergy, stands out clearly only when it is set against that other vision of a socialised man in secular politics—which he set out to expose as a travesty of the human condition. Chesterton's "Everlasting Man" is clearly not Darwinian man, nor is he the Benthamite creature; and he is not even on nodding terms with Feuerbach's *species being*; yet he is a thorough democrat still awaiting a legislative genius. He is, so to speak, kith to the people "who have not spoken yet".

Chesterton and the Reassertion of Realism

THERE ARE MANY criticisms to be made about Chesterton's *oeuvre*. The anti-Protestantism these days look like a period-piece, as does the schoolboy anti-semitism which occasionally peers short-sightedly out at us from an *oeuvre* otherwise chaste and magnanimous. Nor does anti-imperialism ring true today. Post-imperial history, particularly in Africa, is a most unedifying story. Curiously, however, these are *not* the reasons Chesterton has been shelved.

The criticism most frequently heard is that he spoiled a strong argument by making too many jokes. It is true that he bathed every subject he turned his intellect upon with a sort of radiant light-heartedness. There is an effervescence at the heart of a comic spirit which can overwhelm its subject. He had a super-abundance of it. But his critics counted this a defect. They thought it argued a lack of solidity and therefore did not take him seriously as a social critic, particularly when he talked about the tragic side of Man. They ignored his own darker side. The fiction is permeated by an awareness of evil, even if he always chooses homely settings.

Who can read *The Man who was Thursday* or *The Ballad of the White Horse* (1911) without recognising the reality of a universe of glinting malice somewhere in the background? And anyone who has studied the Chapter in *Orthodoxy* entitled "The Maniac" will realise that he did not consider deranged intellectuals a very funny subject. It is much more likely that, far from being frivolous, he was haunted by a sense of the ubiquity of evil which he could scarcely bear to communicate directly. The famous wit is therefore forever lancing the pretensions of darkness from being anything greater than shadow. He seemed, unlike William Golding, or Graham Greene, to want to protect his readers from experiencing the full effects of his vision.

This explains his habit of placing the deeply serious in the middle of a harmless joke. The social criticism is poised between wanting to protect his theoretical antagonists from dangerous error, and painting them a realistic picture of where it might lead. It is doubtful if we shall see this combination of moralist and humorist ever attempted so successfully again. All the more reason, surely, to take him seriously.

Biography & Biology

The Historiography of Gender—By JULIET GARDINER

"DO YOU KNOW the story of the Muse, Mr Foe?" asks Susan Barton, who, in J. M. Coetzee's oblique parable, *Foe* has happened upon the same desert island as Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday, and comes to tell her story to Daniel (De)foe.

"The Muse is a goddess, who visits poets in the night and begets stories upon them. . . . The Muse is both goddess and begetter. I was intended not to be the mother of my story but its begetter. It is not I who am the intended, but you. But why need I argue my case? When is it ever asked of a man who comes courting that he plead in syllogisms? Why should it be demanded of me?"

For "poet" read "historian": let the Muse who comes in the night with her hair unbraided be Clio, and the parable speaks for women's history, where the duality lies both in and between the begetting of the stories, the songs of female experience, and where inspiration consists in what the telling of those stories does to our understanding and use of the historical record. Or to put the question more succinctly, as did the graffito at a women's history conference in America, "How come, if Clio's a woman, she's not on our side?"

The very term "women's history" is problematic, often hoist with its own petard of "otherness" while trying to come to terms with the fact that male dominance, throughout history means that there is no separate women's history. To define it means to explore what the historian Sally Alexander has called "the tension between the plea for equality and the assertion of sexual difference".

There have, of course, been chronicles of women since Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* written in 1405. Indeed, this remarkable allegorical work presaged many current issues in the debates on women's history today.

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In the 18th and 19th centuries it is not to history-writing that it is most profitable to turn for illumination, since their histories of women were largely accounts of the notables among the sex—queens, abbesses, literary figures, saints—and mainly an uncritical celebration of any woman who had managed to surface in the public (i.e. male) sphere. The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th saw what has rather unhistorically been called "first wave feminism": histories of women who were identifiable because of their group profile. The titles give a fair indication; Judith Sargeant Murray's *History of Suffrage*; Olive Schreiner's *Women and Labour*; Ray Strachey's *The Cause*; Wanda Neff's *Victorian Working Women*; Ivy Pinchbeck's *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution* and, more unusually, Alice Clark's *The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*.

The systematic rediscovery of women's history which came about in Britain and America in the late 1960s and '70s and which is now sometimes called "second wave feminism", was the obvious result of changes in society and developments in historical perception. The post-suffrage reawakening of the women's movement, which sought to validate women's experience historically as well as politically and personally, put the retrieval of women's history firmly on its agenda. The broadening of social history also shifted the focus from the public to the private sphere, and by focusing on "ordinary lives" brought up subjects previously considered "natural" and "ahistorical": leisure, housework, childbirth and family life.

In Britain, many of the historians who set to work on women's history at this time came from a background of socialism and labour history. Their work, therefore, tended to concentrate on the relatively small number of women in the workplace. The study of women's history in Britain had started, moreover, in what could be regarded as the margins—WEA classes, evening institutes, community colleges and women's group workshops. Only relatively recently has academe given its imprimatur to "women's history" in the sense of identifying it as a "topic" and putting on courses and seminars, usually at a post-graduate level.

In America the route was rather different. As the editors of *Sex and Class in Women's History*[1] point out, historians of the 1960s and '70s looked at "those areas of American life where female subjects were more easily discernible and socially distinct"—women's literature, for example; all-female institutions like women's colleges or settlement houses; women active in the temperance movement or in evangelical movements. These last were, in some respect, the extension of women's homebuilding skills into the public sphere, "social housekeeping" which accorded well with the powerful American tradition of "Republican Motherhood". Denied direct access to political and economic power, such women nevertheless supposedly helped to shape America in their vicarious matriarchal role of helpmeet and moral influence on their menfolk.

These approaches seemed to fulfil the promise which the titles of many of the books held out: they would "uncover" the women "hidden from history". The "invisible" would be made visible; the silent would be given a language; proper weight would be given to women's experience. But all this suggests "top-up or compensatory history", jigsaw history, fitting in an essential part of the past which had been mysteriously left out—i.e., what were women doing while men were out there ruling, governing, legislating, philosophising, building railways? It had the aim of being remedial in the sense of alerting all historians to be "fair-minded", in their inclusion of women in the historical record. This process of retrieval through the efforts of these descriptive historians was obviously essential, and it remains so: the sheer weight of evidence has made a nonsense of some former categories. How, to take one obvious example, could the term "universal suffrage" be used about a period when half the population did not have the vote?

So women have to be put back into the historical record—eliminating the notorious "index test": i.e., when one looks up "women" in the index of a history book, there may well be several entries, but the word "men" does not appear, since they are the implicit subject matter of the book.

TWO RECENTLY PUBLISHED books are examples of the mainstream approach to such retrieval. *Larissa Reisner* by Cathy Porter[2] tells the life of the "revolutionary Pallas", to set alongside Alexandra Kollontai in the revolutionary canon. Reisner was the Soviet Union's first diplomatic envoy to Afghanistan who, in her thirty-two years, joined the Bolshevik party in 1918, sailed in the great warships of the Russian navy and fought in the front line during the Civil War. She wrote about her experiences, and her poetry and prose were regarded in the Soviet Union as some of the finest of the years of revolution and its aftermath. Her lover and co-revolutionary Karl Radek wrote: "Her one theme is the October Revolution. But as long as people fight, think and feel, and as long as they are drawn to find out what it was like they will read her books and will not put them down until they have reached the last page, for they have the smell of revolution about their breath." *Larissa Reisner* is the latest in Virago's "Pioneer" series, which has included several interesting biographical essays: one on George Eliot, one on Julia Margaret Cameron and one on Emily Dickinson. The stated aim of the series is "to reassess the lives and aims of women from every walk of life and all periods of history". The commitment to reshuffle the pantheon seems open-ended.

Biography has been supplemented, in the late 20th century, by oral history. Here, technology has made possible the direct—and voluminous—recording of the spoken word. Belief in its unmediated authenticity is characteristically expressed in the introduction by Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield to their book *Out of the Cage: Women's Experience in Two World Wars*,[3] which aims

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[1] Judith L. Newton, *et al.* (eds), *Sex and Class in Women's History* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

[2] *Larissa Reisner*. By CATHY PORTER. Virago, £5.50.

[3] *Out of the Cage: Woman's Experience in Two World Wars*. By GAIL BRAYBON and PENNY SUMMERFIELD. Pandora Press/Routledge & Kegan Paul, £16.95.

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". . . to make the voices of working women of whatever class heard, [for] women have had much to say about their lives *when asked*. . . ." (My italics)

Since the 1960s, both world wars have been in the forefront of women's history writing—and televising. The mobilisation of women into the support services of war gave women new "freedom", status, resources, expectations, and experience. It also highlighted their sparky adaptability, contrasting with men's frequent resentment of the female take-over of male preserves in the workplace, and the convenient government rewrite of what being a woman was all about. Early debates saw war as an engine of change, liberating and realising women's potential. Later books, Braybon and Summerfield included, are more sceptical: they see war as affording opportunities for the manipulation of women's skills with no concomitant re-evaluation of their needs or aspirations; when peace and demobilisation came, the ratchet slipped back with alarming rapidity, downgrading women's contribution to the economy and to society, and reinforcing family stereotypes.

The wish to "uncover" women's experience without the distortion caused by male presuppositions was an important motive for the initial forays into women's history. This has impelled research into primary sources, supplementing the parliamentary reports, royal commissions, charters, of which "proper history" so often tends to be made. There has recently been a small deluge of opportunistic publishing ventures; hastily flung-together anthologies, of which Mary Gifford Brown's *Reflections: Images of British Women in their Own Words* may stand for many.[4] This reveals, for example, that women are young, fall in love, fall out of love, mind, "aspire and achieve" and grow old. Routledge and Kegan Paul, however, have found a way of bringing the prodigious archives of the Fawcett Society to a wider public. *The Women's Source Library*, edited by Dale Spender and Candida Lacey collects and prints "written sources which document the history of women's struggle for liberation" (in the broadest sense), grouped around a subject. The result in each case is then called "a debate".

One of the first of these volumes is *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and the Langham Place Group*, edited by Candida Lacey.[5] Bodichon was part of a circle (which included Mary Ann Evans before she decided on the persona of George Eliot) who set up *The English Women's Journal*, a public platform for the "women question" in the mid-19th century. She campaigned in particular for votes for women (not achieved until 1919) and the Married Women's Property Act (not passed until 1893), as well as the right—and need—for women to do paid work, rather than the philanthropic work usually associated with their sex and station.

In the same series, *The Sexuality Debates*, edited by Sheila Jeffreys,[6] dismisses the idea that the history of sexuality is the

[4] *Reflections: Images of British Women in their Own Words*. By MARY GIFFORD BROWN. Hutchinson, £5.95.

[5] *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and the Langham Place Group*. Edited by CANDIDA LACEY. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £25.00.

[6] *The Sexuality Debates*. Edited by SHEILA JEFFREYS. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £25.00.

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story of the journey from Victorian darkness and prudery and lying-there-and-thinking-of-England, to the "light of sexual freedom", although the documents end in 1923—rather short, one might think, of the advent of accessibility to effective birth control and the insistence that "orgasm-is-every-women's-right".

Instead, Jeffreys shows the complexity of the historical debate, which in her view largely consists of reactions to male sexuality and abuse. Included are some very interesting—and some very well known—passages from such crusaders as Margaret Sanger, Marie Stopes, Annie Besant, Josephine Butler and Havelock Ellis, and a chilling document from one Isaac Baker Brown. Writing in 1866, he advocated clitoridectomy as a "cure" for epilepsy and other "nervous" or specifically female complaints including frigidity. There is also a bitter, ironic, and significantly anonymous piece on "The Spinster" written "By One" in 1911:

> "What is all the fuss about? Is it all because a man did not turn up at the right time? Well, partly yes and partly no. Not *any* man; *any* man was not what she had been led to expect. She had, in fact, been specially warned against *any* man. It was the right man she was expecting. HER man."

The third volume in the series so far published is *The Education Papers: Women's Quest for Equality in Britain 1850-1912* edited by Dale Spender.[7] This collects together articles and pamphlets which take as their starting-point Mary Wollstonecraft's declaration in *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) that there can be no sexual equality without educational equality. It then charts the progress towards what Spender calls "quantity of education"—the spread of educational opportunities for girls—and discusses the crucial question of how girls should be educated and to what purpose.

IF THE TASK of uncovering and documenting women's history is obvious, so must be its limitations. The accumulation of histories of women can perpetuate that "otherness" which has kept women out of the mainstream of history. It can isolate women from society and maroon them in a discrete sisterhood—perhaps a sorority of struggle and misunderstanding. Such insulated history admits female experience but only moderately explores its meaning, for to examine women in a "separate sphere" can be taken to imply acceptance of this as biologically decreed rather than historically constructed. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese writes in her influential article "Placing Women in History" (*New Left Review*, No. 133), "adding women to history is not the same as adding women's history". The implications of "adding women's history" are radical. The aim is not simply to unearth oppression and chart the progress towards "liberation", but to look afresh at the historical record in the light of how the definition of "masculinity" and "femininity" shifts over time and place, differing, also, according to class, race, religion, and ethnicity. As Simone de Beauvoir wrote, "the eternal feminine is a lie because nature plays only a tiny part in the development of a human being: we are social beings."

THE QUESTION RUNNING through the currently revised historical debates on education, work, sexuality, citizen's rights, health, and so on, is essentially what a woman *should* be. This, in turn, poses a consideration of what a woman *is*—a convenient tautology. Ideas change. As Alice Browne shows in *The Eighteenth Century Feminist Mind*,[8] questions of women's education and women's rationality were central around the time of the Enlightenment. Was the purpose of educating women ornamental, to make them more pleasing companions for men? Or was it instrumental, turning them into good mothers and heads of households, possibly even capable of earning their own living? (The debate can seem tinged with the academic since more than a degree of instrumentality enters into a consideration of the ornamental, for the lot of an unmarried middle-class daughter was not, on the whole, an appealing one.)

It was not just a matter of what subjects a girl should be taught: music, art, needlework. Latin, maybe Greek—even Hebrew was occasionally considered. Was Linnaeus too demanding for the female mind? Hannah More recommended studying the texts of Locke, but realised that this would be considered startling. A woman should be able to tell a story coherently without interjecting phrases like "and so", "in short", "do you see?" (presumably the 18th century's equivalent of "right" and "know what I mean") and she should be able to avoid the hyperbole of "detesting a daffodil", "adoring honeysuckle" and drinking from an "immense teacup".

Jean-Jacques Rousseau discussing, in *Émile*, the different education of Émile and of Sophie, presumes an equality of esteem, but accepts the notion of separate spheres. Men and women are radically different, and women's field of moral action requires a different training. However, as Mary Wollstonecraft argued, this "difference" could simply reinforce the inferiority of women. The supposed set and capabilities of the female mind indicated the range of possible intellectual input which in its turn fulfilled the prediction. As the anonymous *Sophie: A Person of Quality* pointed out in 1739:

> "It is a very great absurdity to argue that learning is useless to a woman because, forsooth, they have no share in public offices. . . . Why is learning no good to us? Because we have no share in public office? And why have we no share in public office? Because we have no learning."

In the 18th century the unspoken debate over women's education and role in society was essentially about female rationality. Were women capable, as Mary Wollstonecraft both asserted and demonstrated, of abstract thought? Or was their intelligence intuitive, perceptive? And how were those attributes to be weighed in the balance? As John Stuart Mill

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[7] *The Education Papers: Women's Quest for Equality in Britain 1850-1912*. Edited by DALE SPENDER. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £25.00.

[8] *The Eighteenth Century Feminist Mind*. By ALICE BROWNE. Harvester, £32.50.

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argued in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) "what is called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing". Elaine Showalter, in her rich and subtle book *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture*, shows that by the mid-19th century there were scientific theories aplenty supplied by Darwin and his disciples to underpin narrow Victorian ideals of femininity.[9] Female intellectual inferiority could be understood as the results of reproductive specialisation, and "womanly" traits of self-sacrifice and service—so convenient for the comfort of a patriarchal society—could be defended in evolutionary terms as essential for the survival and improvement of the race.

In much the same way, scientific theories of women's health, and particularly their mental health, reinforced social attitudes and behaviour. The history of madness is now regarded as being the history of a cultural, just as much as a medical definition, for it makes assumptions about norms and acceptable behaviour: it reflects prevailing cultural attitudes, social control and the operation of power. As an inmate of Bedlam quoted in Roy Porter's *The Social History of Madness*[10] says, "They called me mad, I called them mad, and damn it they outvoted me".

THERE IS NO particular novelty in looking at madness in this way; since Michel Foucault published *Madness and Civilization* in 1961, the repressive ideologies which lay behind the treatment of the insane have been explored in various studies. But Elaine Showalter's is the first full exploration of madness and gender. The metaphors used and the transgressions identified throw into sharp relief the debate about what is a proper objective for the female sex.

Those medically qualified saw the essential nature of women and determined the steps or treatment they thought necessary to bring a mad woman back to equilibrium. Henry Maudsley, the stern Victorian psychiatrist and founder of the Maudsley Hospital, argued that "there is sex in the mind as distinctly as there is sex in the body". Because the brain was believed to respond to the operation of the reproductive organs (as it did, of course, to other organs in the body), the mentalities of the sexes differed as well.

By nature, woman was constituted to be the complement of man, and was not only physically constructed to give birth, but mentally constituted to take care of children. Mental breakdowns occurred when women tried to defy their "natures" by seeking alternative roles instead of their natural maternal functions. The popular 19th-century theory of energy conservation meant that if women spent their energy on such masculine pursuits as competitive intellectual activity, their physiology would be irreparably drained, beginning with the cessation of menstruation and culminating in the atrophy of the reproductive capacity and the evolution of a race like "sexless ants".

The "overheated brain" diagnosis was one which had particularly well documented implications for women at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, when the standard treatment for neurasthenia—which was regarded as a predominantly female complaint—was the rest cure, in which the patient was retired to a state of isolation and infantile dependency, where—significantly—any mental stimulation such as reading or writing was denied, the aim being to introduce a state of overfed tranquillity bordering on the bovine.

SUCH TREATMENT was the lot of many intellectual, creative "nervous" women, among them Alice James, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (who wrote her powerful *The Yellow Wallpaper* out of her experiences), and, of course, Virginia Woolf who was consigned to rest cures for several periods during her life, and was driven to conclude that "really a doctor is worse than a husband".

It is undoubtedly from literature that we receive our most powerful interpretations of women's madness as an example of female rebellion, the authentic voice speaking the unspeakable, the passionate reaction to the limitations of the feminine role, and an exeat from female passivity.

Florence Nightingale's novel *Cassandra* was finally published privately in an attenuated form in 1860. It was written while she was battling with a psychotic illness probably partly induced by frustration and inactivity prior to her experiences in the Crimean War. In *Cassandra*, Nightingale sees women as so repressed that they

> ". . . rant and rail but never act. Christ if he had been a woman might have been nothing but a great complainer."

She makes an impassioned plea throughout her novel, not for independent means, or education, or the vote, but for the right to feel.

> "Give us back our suffering, we cry to heaven in our hearts—suffering rather than indifferentism: for out of nothing comes nothing. But out of our pain may come cure. Better have pain than paralysis."

The pursuit of women's history seems unlikely to achieve a

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[9] *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980.* By ELAINE SHOWALTER. Virago, £6.95.
[10] *The Social History of Madness.* By ROY PORTER. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

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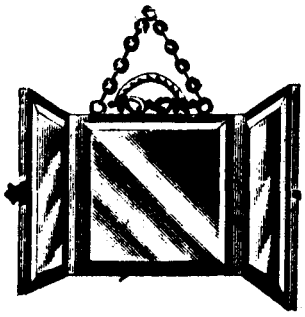
synthesis—and therein lies its importance. The sources are varied and the messages coded, but the aim must be to recognise the particular duality wherein women are part of every class and race and group and colour, and yet have had to develop their values within a male-dominated world, which gives a certain commonality to their history. But this should not simply counterpose an alternative chronicle, a "tale of prating foremothers" to what Fox-Genovese calls the "single, triumphant consciousness" of the male record. Rather, women's history should celebrate its subversive role as a critique of cultural, economic and political assumptions in the past and present. The ghettoisation of women's history denies it this key role.

Women's history should allow itself no easy sentimentalisation: it must not serve as a last complacent bastion of a "Whig interpretation of history", plotting women's struggle for rights and recognition. Women do not need to uncover their past in order to provide a pedigree for their present. The achievement of historical equality is not to forge a false homogeneity on oppression and inequality, but rather to recognise that without reference to gender, the history that will be written will not be the history of humanity.

Final Belief

Thoughts on Rainer Maria Rilke—By MICHAEL HULSE



IN THE ARRESTING passage which concludes his essay "Effects of Analogy", Wallace Stevens proposed that we:

> "Take the case of a man for whom reality is enough, as, at the end of his life, he returns to it like a man returning from Nowhere to his village and to everything there that is tangible and visible, which he has come to cherish and wants to be near. He sees without images. But is he not seeing a clarified reality of his own? Does he not dwell in an analogy? His imageless world is, after all, of the same sort as a world full of the obvious analogies of happiness or unhappiness, innocence or tragedy, thoughtlessness or the heaviness of the mind. In any case, these are the pictorializations of men, for whom the world exists as a world and for whom life exists as life, the objects of their passions, the objects before which they come and speak, with intense choosing, words that we remember and make our own. Their words have made a world that transcends the world and a life livable in that transcendence. It is a transcendence achieved by means of the minor effects of figurations and the major effects of the poet's sense of the world and of the motive music of his poems and it is the imaginative dynamism of all these analogies together. Thus poetry becomes and is a transcendent analogue composed of the particulars of reality, created by the poet's sense of the world, that is to say, his attitude, as he intervenes and interposes the appearances of that sense."

The creator of "the necessary angel of earth", like the great Austro-Hungarian whose inmost experience told him that "every angel is terrible", had fed on honey-dew and drunk the milk of Paradise.

To say this is not to say that Stevens was ever willing to turn his back on everyday reality. Quite the contrary: he insisted that "the poet must get rid of the hieratic in everything that concerns him and must move constantly in the direction of the credible", he insisted that the poet "must create his unreal out of what is real", and (supremely) he insisted that poetry "is an interdependence of the imagination and reality as equals".

The real remained the touchstone for Stevens, to a degree and in a manner that ceased to matter to Rainer Maria Rilke. The two poets developed in distinct and different ways, and in the end it was the American's very fidelity to the idea that "the world exists as a world" which prevented him from attaining the purer greatness that Rilke achieved. None the less, Stevens and Rilke were the 20th century's most passionate exemplars of that central poetic ideal of Romantic Modernism, the Coleridgean Platonist.

Coleridge is the very soul of these last two hundred years of poetry, and a much-quoted passage in the fourteenth chapter of the *Biographia Literaria* (1817) still constitutes (to my mind) the core of the matter:

> "The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone, and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control (*laxis effertur habenis*) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with

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> more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry."

In so far as Modernism and Post-Modernism (which admittedly does not honour Coleridge's three concluding subordinations) are the twilight and darkness phases of that large movement of the human spirit which we conventionally call Romanticism, this passage of Coleridge's can be understood to have breathtaking prescience. The ideal of reconciliation broods over the Romantic imagination, from the blissful dawn of William Wordsworth to the despairing night of Paul Celan; and, just as the idea of a god gains its greatest force if the god remains inaccessible, so this great Romantic idea has drawn its most vigorous power from its very unattainability.

RILKE WAS VIRTUALLY ALONE among the greatest Modernists in striving for the reconciliation Coleridge posits as his ideal. This is not to say that Rilke necessarily accomplished it; indeed, his very triumph often appears to rest on a shortfall. Stevens seems the only other poet of Romantic Modernism with a passionate sense of the quest for a Platonic shape in language; yet Stevens, for all his lip-service to the importance of expressing "not ideas about the thing but the thing itself", usually fails more signally than Rilke to achieve that balance of imagination and reality which was his declared ideal. For all their force, Stevens's poems are frequently marred by a rarefied over-abstraction. Paradoxically, it was Rilke, although less willing than Stevens to admit that everyday reality was the touchstone, who configured the shape of the "transcendent analogue" in those supreme terms which have made the *Duino Elegies* and the *Sonnets to Orpheus* the heart of our century's accomplishment in poetry.

Was it because Rilke was so willing to accept subordination, to accept a role as the servant of an art, in short: to accept? That is undoubtedly part of the explanation. If ever a life was lived in the service of poetry, it was Rilke's. If ever a poet's life was lived in a spirit of passive acceptance, it was Rilke's. But there are internal, aesthetic reasons why it was Rilke's "transcendent analogue" that touched the particular perfections possible to dying Romanticism.

WHEN RILKE MET Rodin in 1902 and gradually grew acquainted with the sculptor's work, methods, and ideas, it not only enriched his own experience but also clarified his conception of the independent unity and integrity of works of art. Until then he had sensed this only inchoately. The monograph on Rodin, for which Rilke made notes as early as 1900, expressed this in terms essentially theoretical, while the poems he wrote in the years from 1902 to 1908, beginning with "The Panther", gave it the expression of *praxis*. Only a little later, the Anglo-American Imagists came to occupy the same position as the Rilke of those years, with T. E. Hulme demanding a "visual, concrete" language made of "fresh epithets and fresh metaphors" which would "hand over sensations bodily", and William Carlos Williams requiring that there be "no ideas but in things".

Such phrases might easily have been describing the thing-poems Rilke wrote at the period of the breakthrough, poems such as "Lady on a Balcony" (which I quote in a translation published by C. F. MacIntyre at Berkeley in 1940):

> *Swiftly she comes forth, wrapped in the wind,*
> *bright in the light, as though she were snatched out,*
> *while the black room seems cut*
> *to fill the door behind her,*
>
> *even as a cameo's dark background lets*
> *a shimmering something softly through the edge;*
> *you think: the evening was not here and light*
> *until she came and leaned above the ledge,*
>
> *putting for just a moment even her hands*
> *away from her—that she might be aloof,*
> *and turning them upward to the sky beyond*
> *the dark row of the roofs.*

Many of Rilke's poems at that time were about animals or flowers, works of art or other human artefacts, and achieved an intensely centred tranquillity that remains uniquely attractive. Many others resembled "Lady on a Balcony" (and, indeed, numerous Imagist poems by H. D., Aldington, and Pound) in basing their themes on one dramatic figure whose action seemed to define matter of greater import. Rilke's subjects were various; yet what is common to all of his thing-poems is a sense of fact and precision. "The image is not an idea", declared Pound, and in this sense the Rilke of those years was creating images. Never before and never after did he have so highly-tuned a conviction that "the world exists as a world", so firm a dedication to the real. His vision had a concentration and fidelity which were as revolutionary in the poetry of the German language as the writings of the Imagists were in poetry in English.

IT COULD SCARCELY LAST. The man who was later to describe himself, in a famous letter to his Polish translator, as storing up honey in the great golden hive of the invisible, was not a man to whom we need look for a long-lasting love of everyday actuality; and the metaphysics of change, resurrection, and metamorphosis which we associate with Rilke's major achievements would have been inconceivable in a writer with a strong affection for realism. Nevertheless, as Idris Parry once tellingly put it (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 December 1975):

> "Metaphysics only makes sense when it is based on physics. Rilke gives the impression that he is talking about the infinite, but his poetry is based on natural fact, which is always an amalgam of finite change."

The heroism of Rilke's struggle for a Coleridgean reconciliation does not become fully apparent, in all its aesthetic implications, until we understand that he first submitted to the most revolutionary of imbalances. Just as the Eliot of the

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Four Quartets is unthinkable without that earlier Eliot, whose Poundian schooling had issued in the theory of the objective correlative, so the Rilke of the elegies and sonnets is unthinkable without that earlier Rilke of the *New Poems*, that Rilke whose panther and merry-go-round and rose window have inviolably independent existences which (far from being in any way symbolic) are the very apotheosis of the real.

The protracted gestation of the *Duino Elegies* signalled not only the intrusion, with a vengeance, of the real world—four of these years saw the bloody waste of the First World War—but also the major evolution in Rilke's sense of idea and image. "The image is not an idea": Pound's declaration insisted on the difference, and implied that a choice must be made. What Rilke so beautifully achieved in the *Duino Elegies* was the knowledge that if poetry is to be "a transcendent analogue" it must reconcile idea and image in the ideal Platonist manner outlined by Coleridge. He put the choice behind him. Integration was all. And the resulting poetry, so beautiful and so moving and at times "true", could read like this passage from the end of the eighth elegy (in J. B. Leishman's translation):

> *And how dismayed is any womb-born thing*
> *that has to fly! As though it were afraid*
> *of its own self, it zigzags through the air*
> *like crack through cup. The way a bat's track runs*
> *rendingly through the evening's porcelain.*
> *And we, spectators always, everywhere,*
> *looking at, never out of, everything!*
> *It fills us. We arrange it. It collapses.*
> *We re-arrange it, and collapse ourselves.*
>
> *Who's turned us round like this, so that we always,*
> *do what we may, retain the attitude*
> *of someone who's departing? Just as he,*
> *on the last hill, that shows him all his valley*
> *for the last time, will turn and stop and linger,*
> *we live our lives, for ever taking leave.*

The complex awareness of the fragility of the self which is the pre-eminent characteristic of Romantic Modernism is here united with the simplest, yet weightiest of images to give an elated sense of permanence to a frail statement of impermanence. The joy we experience in reading such lines, that joy we feel in the presence of the great creators, is given by the happy authority of poetry which contains within it all the reasons why it is so and not otherwise. To read Rilke is quite simply to experience one of the great accomplishments of the human spirit.

To read of Rilke's life, on the other hand, is frequently a disappointing and vexing experience. Despite Rilke's place in the aesthetics of poetry, we still feel in this century that major writing, if not necessarily "committed", ought to show some signs of social, moral and political awareness. Even poetry, we believe, is the more valuable if it is in some degree answerable to life.

When we consider Rilke, our normal experience is to find ourselves forced out into that territory where poetry threatens to be answerable to nothing but aesthetics and metaphysics; even these lines from the eighth elegy, wonderful and moving as they doubtless are, smack of a sensibility removed a touch too much from the everyday world where "life exists as life". And if we read a biography as meticulous, even-handed and scholarly as Donald Prater's *A Ringing Glass*,[1] we find that not even Rilke's life was answerable to life.

Anglo-American reactions to Rilke, the man, especially in England, have a regrettable tradition of pouring scorn on him in such a way as to imply that a charlatan and scrounger of this order could not be worth taking wholly seriously. Ian Hamilton, for instance, once described Rilke (in *The Sunday Times*, 23 June 1985) as a "dandified freeloader who shuttled busily from one deep-bosomed castle to the next—his verses in one hand, and in the other his trusty copy of the *Almanach de Gotha*". It is a short step from phrase-mongering of this kind to characteristically English philistinism; and it is essential to guard against judging Rilke and the singular, long-gone world of elegance and patronage he opted to inhabit in the same way as we might (in unsympathetic mood) judge the begging letters of Dylan Thomas. Still, once that has been said, it is important to admit that the Rilke we meet in Donald Prater's pages is only intermittently a man who commands respect; indeed, there are times when he provokes such near-contempt that we wonder how this man could write such poetry.

Rilke was always more than fortunate in being able to tap the nobility of women, whether that nobility was in their pedigrees or in their characters; the extent to which he was prepared to make parasitic use of this ability remains frankly shocking even after we have made allowances for the attitudes to private patronage that prevailed before 1914. His letters, to women and to men, all too often make one of two unpleasant impressions: either that he will say what he knows will best please his correspondent, or that he is writing prettily to win admiration. To his wife, the sculptress Clara Westhoff, he behaved with the cavalier shoddiness that accompanies extreme self-centredness. To his long-suffering publisher Kippenberg, Rilke was frequently little short of absurd.

My own patience, I find, is exasperated to breaking-point when I read of the poet's career during the First World War. Having hailed the War in a series of silly hymns, he changed his tune when the Austro-Hungarian empire, which set the age limit at 42, conscripted him and put him through the Army's basic training. According to Rilke, who was apparently untroubled by the thought of what men elsewhere might be enduring, three weeks of this were "torture". A well-meaning and avuncular bureaucracy transferred him to the War Archives in Vienna, where his sole duty for a few hours a day was to fabricate rosy-tinted propaganda describing heroism at the Front; even this (together with a tram ride) was too fatiguing.

[1] Donald Prater, *A Ringing Glass: The Life of Rainer Maria Rilke* (Oxford University Press, 1986).

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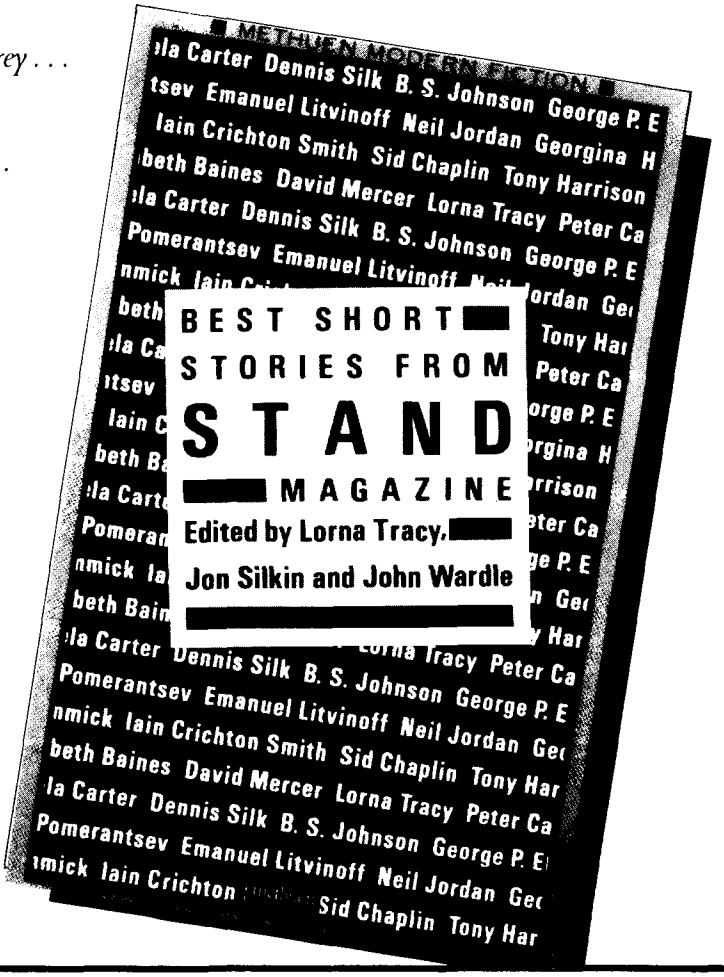

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Rilke was no conscientious objector. He simply didn't like having his comfort disturbed. While other men were being killed and maimed, he would return from his cushy number in the archives too exhausted even to read, and note with relief: "I'm lucky to have been all my life a practised and dedicated sleeper." Donald Prater, observing that Rilke's pitiful behaviour remained uncorrected even when he was able to exchange Vienna for Hertha Koenig's estate, wryly writes:

> "Picking raspberries and gooseberries, warm or still wet with dew, in the productive kitchen garden was a pleasure which his spirit could summon just enough energy to enjoy."

Donald Prater is a discreet biographer, reluctant to focus on his subject's weaker, unattractive points, but I found that his account of Rilke's War years confirmed me in a long-standing irritation.

How sad, though, to feel this way! It is not at all that I want every poet to be a Byron. But there is room for some reasonable compromise, surely. Rilke is too much of an egocentric sop to be endured, and it is all too easy to see why he has often had an unsympathetic press. He was a great poet: but a feeble human being. Donald Prater's exemplary biography is so thorough that, even when we have made the allowances the biographer nudges us into making, we can at best remark: "*Well, it was another time and another country*", "*It takes all sorts*", ". . . *and besides, the brat is dead*".

To turn from Rilke summoning enough energy, in war-torn Europe's quietest corner, to enjoy picking raspberries and gooseberries, to aesthetic theories of reconciling idea and image in order to produce a transcendent analogue, is to remind ourselves with a jolt that the language of poetry, aesthetics, and criticism, although it expresses important and abiding truths, can look thin and foolish when placed beside the flesh-and-blood preoccupations of everyday life. Poets (even great poets) forget this at their peril. I believe that Rilke was a great poet and that he invaluably focused the spiritual questions that great poetry always provokes; but I am convinced also that his life as a man opened up a credibility gap, a gap between imagination (a privileged life that angels lead in castles and hotels) and reality (life—and death—in those myriad places that are so very far from nobility and beauty). Wallace Stevens began his poem "Asides on the Oboe" with these lines:

> *The prologues are over. It is a question, now,*
> *Of final belief. So, say that final belief*
> *Must be in a fiction. It is time to choose.*

Rilke's final belief was in the fiction of his unassailable self. If we were ever to suspect that his poetry amounted in the end to an elaborate circumstantial support for that fiction, our faith in the value of poetry might be severely shaken. But the fact of the matter is that it is no longer of any consequence whether the subject of Donald Prater's biography was the equal of the poet who created the *Duino Elegies* and *Sonnets to Orpheus* and *New Poems*. My final belief is that in great poetry, reconciliation is effected: the species is immortal; Man is a god.

Trespass

The veldt sleeps under stars as white
As a pioneer who has come to stay

—The opening of my "elegy" for Biko,
My conscience on my sleeve and written out.

What followed I'd forgotten I'd repressed
Until a whip of sunlight cracked bold type:
"Nightmare in the townships" . . . I winced,

Retraced those bumptious steps to a phone-box
Where I would right a "small misunderstanding".

My lines, well-meaning, had "upset" your friend—
Indian, exiled from South Africa.

How much I'd trespassed hit me while we spoke.
"He . . . he was special to us". Were those tears?

The door's weight . . . I stood outside, shamed. Stars whitened.

Michael O'Neill

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Books Encountered

After the Avant-Garde: Essays in Art and Culture. By ROBERT BOYERS. Penn State Press, $24.95.

The editor of *Salmagundi* and Professor of English at Skidmore College in a decade's essays politely dispatching much fashionable tripe, including "the idea of a permanent adversary relationship between artists and spectators". He thinks it "both necessary and possible to distinguish between good art and bad". Wow!

The Tongue Set Free: Remembrance of a European Childhood. By ELIAS CANETTI. Translated by JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL. André Deutsch, £12.95.

Absorbing and illuminating. Born into a family of Sephardim on the Danube, amid Turks and visiting Gypsies, Canetti was in a Babel of languages, then transplanted to . . . Manchester. Soon came Vienna and Zurich—a paradise lost when mother dragged him into Germany: see the next volume. A history of our time.

Orwellian Language and the Media. By PAUL CHILTON. Pluto Press, £14.95.

The author of *Language and the Nuclear Arms Debate* returns to develop Orwell's intuitive Newspeak notions with grafts from Saussure, Chomsky, *et al.*, claiming that military metaphors distort discussion of education, industry, etc. Maybe: but Chilton's real, more debatable bugaboos are deterrence and what he calls Nukespeak.

Requiem for the Resistance: The Civilian Struggle against Nazism in Holland and Germany. By HERMAN FRIEDHOFF. Bloomsbury, £14.95.

Over-glum title and over-ambitious subtitle for an art-of-being-misruled memoir of the author's and a friend's wartime experiences, mainly in clandestine intelligence-gathering ("humint") rather than special operations; but humour, sex, and suspense spice the story too.

Young Betjeman. By BEVIS HILLIER. John Murray, £15.95.

Teeming, fascinating account of John Betjeman up to his marriage in 1933. The jokes and pranks, and the Oxford camp ambience, seem rather slight for full scholarly treatment; but the resultant portrait is of a far more lively and resilient iconoclast than the staid, fogeyish *persona* he liked to adopt.

Doris Lessing: The Alchemy of Survival. Edited by CAREY KAPLAN and ELLEN CRONAN ROSE. Ohio University Press, £21.80.

Eleven essays, prefaced by a survey of the existing literature, but disgracefully lacking an index. Using Marxism, feminism, anti-colonialism, etc., as Ariadne's threads to the labyrinth, the authors find no consistent Minotaur: Doris Lessing is too canny to be totally stereotyped, as *The Good Terrorist* pleasingly showed.

People and Places: A Selection 1975-1987. By P. J. KAVANAGH. Carcanet, £12.95.

Pleasant, Lamblike essays, mostly from the author's genial *Spectator* column. The weightiest tackle Edward Thomas and Richard Jeffries, G. K. Chesterton, and ITMA, the wartime radio comedy series which his father scripted. An occasional actor, Kavanagh also sparkles on his part in *Half Moon Street*, an unsparkling film.

A Life. By ELIA KAZAN. André Deutsch, £17.95.

Modestly priced, candidly written, incredibly detailed, and surprisingly priapic 848-page autobiography by the 79-year-old director, famous for filmic theatre and theatrical films, including *On the Waterfront*, which obliquely explained his naming names to the Un-American Activities witch-hunters. It reads like the Great Un-American Novel.

Anti-Racism: A Mania Exposed. By RUSSELL LEWIS. Introduction by ENOCH POWELL. Quartet Books, £12.95.

The catchpenny subtitle, and the author of the Introduction, may mean that this preaches only to those already converted to suspicion of excesses by the "race relations industry". But Lewis's heart is in the right place—i.e. in favour of assimilation, integration, and race harmony: the market is colour-blind, he Torily claims.

Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide. By KENNETH MCLEISH. Bloomsbury, £12.95.

Weird enterprise, reminiscent of Arnold Bennett's *Literary Taste* (uncited). An alphabetical-order gazetteer of prose fiction writers with booklists and brief non-critical descriptions, suggestions for further reading, and interspersed listings covering themes and affinities. Wet weekend parlour-game? Literary *TV Times*?

Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction. By JEFFREY RICHARDS.

Scholarly, ambivalently critical-affectionate essays on twelve key works: by Hughes, Farrar, Reed, Wodehouse, Kipling, Forster, Vachell, Raymond, Alec Waugh, Hilton, and Frank Richards (no relation). The author believes that popular affection for Billy Bunter and others may have helped perpetuate Britain's private boarding-school system. Pull the other one, chaps.

Coastwise Lights. By ALAN ROSS. Collins Harvill, £12.95.

Charming, poem-sprinkled memoirs, with memories of the likes of William Plomer, John Lehmann, Gavin Maxwell, John Minton, Cyril Connolly, and especially Keith Vaughan. More interesting even than *Blindfold Games*—although cricket still looms large. The only major flaw is the lack of an index to so many friends.

T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism. By RICHARD SHUSTERMAN. Duckworth, £19.95.

One of the banes of the word-processing age is the appearance of books in what looks like brilliant typescript, insufficiently leaded. This makes Professor Shusterman's masterly analysis look more forbidding than it is. He sees Eliot as a subtle, critical pragmatist, finding personal pleasure in literature, and opposed to "the professional scientism of the university scholar". Fancy that.

The School of Genius. By ANTHONY STORR. André Deutsch, £12.95.

"Conversation enriches the understanding", quotes Dr Storr from Edward Gibbon, "but solitude is the school of genius." By "genius" Gibbon probably meant less than we do: but no matter. Solitude emerges as a balm for grief, a chapel for meditation, a compost for thought. Examples brilliantly reinforce the argument.

The Berlin Blockade. By ANN and JOHN TUSA. Hodder & Stoughton, £16.95.

By far the best of the books on the 1948 blockade and airlift—packed with fresh documentation, narrated with dramatic skill, analysed with lively intelligence. A fitting sequel to the same authors' account of *The Nuremberg Trial*. Only one niggle: why not more on how precisely the Berlin crisis spurred the Atlantic Pact?

The Friends: Britain's Post-War Secret Intelligence Operations. By NIGEL WEST, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.95.

More of the Wright stuff? Yes, but not much more. Most of the narrative merely adds detail to familiar stories, in the flat, knowledgeable style familiar from the author's half-dozen other books. The main new public disclosures are more names—although "the firm" insisted on the removal of quite a few.

R.M.

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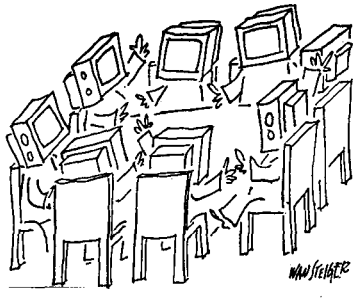
MEDIA

Talking about the BBC

Does "B" Stand for Bias?

By Elie Kedourie & Andrew Mango



KEDOURIE: In our previous conversations we have, on more than one occasion,[1] discussed this very powerful medium, radio and television broadcasting; and on more than one occasion I have expressed my puzzlement as to how it possibly could be "controlled", "restrained", or otherwise prevented or deterred from doing damage to society at large. This question is more to the fore today than it has ever been.

MANGO: *I think we have to distinguish between democratic countries and despotic countries, and within democratic countries between Public Service broadcasting and Commercial broadcasting. Of course, in despotic countries the problem doesn't arise at all as broadcasting services are controlled by the state and say, or show, precisely what the state and the government want them to say and show. In democratic societies, when it comes to private broadcasting stations, all one can say generally is that they should pursue their activities within the framework of the relevant legislation.*

Perhaps the most difficult problem arises with Public Service broadcasting. My experience, is with the British system—I spent nearly 40 years of my life working for the BBC—and I have been struck by the fact that it is a very unusual—if not unique—organisation among Public Service broadcasters. It is not controlled by the Government in the way that Spanish, Greek, and (to a large extent) French radio and television, are controlled by their governments. Nor are there any formulas to regulate its behaviour, as is the case with Public Service broadcasting in countries like West Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Italy. There it was assumed—in the case of Holland right at the beginning, elsewhere the assumption grew gradually—that Public Service broadcasters could not be trusted, if left to themselves, to behave with total impartiality; there had to be a structure or framework which imposed balance.

This was done in a variety of ways: either by having political-party representation in the governing bodies (the representation depending on the strength of parties in the national parliament or in the regional assemblies), or by distributing the channels, as is the case in Italy where there is a Christian Democrat Channel, a Left-wing channel, and a radio channel for smaller parties who are considered to be on the side of the angels.

But, also, in addition to representation in governing bodies or the distribution of channels, the staff is balanced within the organisation. This is the case in Germany and in Belgium, where there is a convention that, for example, if the head of a department or an editor-in-chief belongs to one party, say the Socialists, either his assistant or the head of the department next door would be a Conservative or a Christian Democrat or whatever. People's preferences and tendencies are generally known and, therefore, balanced.

Now the BBC has never had such a system, either within its Board of Governors, where there are no quotas for political parties or interest groups, or within its own staff. People are just expected to behave impartially.

KEDOURIE: Yes, I think you have set out the position very clearly. The BBC is a news-gathering organisation, a news-disseminating organisation. In this, it is no different from a newspaper. In a modern, sophisticated society, large and complex, it is necessary that there should be such organisations. But these media cannot do what, say, Parliament, the Auditor and Comptroller General, or an Ombudsman do—they cannot be a "Public Watchdog". Why? It is simply the case that neither a newspaper nor the BBC, nor the private television networks, are really equipped to carry out large-scale investigations into public affairs in a proper manner. They do not wield the power, and they do not have the facilities.

So, if the BBC which, over and above all these considerations, is a publicly chartered body, engages in what is called "investigative journalism", then it is going beyond what a news-gathering and news-disseminating organisation should do—and perhaps goes beyond what its charter allows or requires it to do.

MANGO: *Isn't the philosophical aspect a bit more difficult than the practical aspect? Practically, there is a big difference between the BBC and individual newspapers, in that the BBC, under a Royal Charter, is not intended to have its own opinions —it is not meant to editorialise. Secondly, it is, I believe, a fact that the reputation of the BBC has not been built on "investigative" or "crusading" journalism but on excellence in the selection and editing of generally available news—news that is disseminated in the first place by commercial news agencies, but also news that is brought to its attention by journalists working on private newspapers.*

The BBC's reputation is built on care, and a knowledge of

[1] See "Thinking about the Violence in Lebanon", ENCOUNTER, June 1984, and "The Middle East: Illusions Great and Small", ENCOUNTER, September-October 1982.

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sources, on certain values, on the importance of individual stories, on very simple rules (for example, that an individual story must come from several independent and credible sources before it is reported) and, very importantly, on the excision, as far as possible, of personal views, subjective comment, and even adjectives from news bulletins.

There is an apocryphal story about a BBC editor who, it is said, blue-pencilled the words "in an unexpected development" in a story given to him by a sub-editor, saying, "You may not have expected it—but a man less stupid than you might have expected it! Just give us the facts."

It is this tradition, I think, which is still the reason why the BBC World Service is trusted and believed, why it is the premier broadcasting service in the world, and why the BBC is so highly esteemed in this country.

KEDOURIE: If the situation is as you describe it (and I think I agree with you) how, then, has it happened that in recent years the idea has been put about that it is a right and perhaps a duty of the BBC to engage in investigative journalism? We saw this most recently in the affair of the TV series on *The Secret Society*, which "uncovered" governmental military secrets, and in many other exposés of corruption, maladministration, racism and the like.

MANGO: *The idea, of course, has come from the United States where the press is considered traditionally as "the Fourth Estate", with a right to "check-and-balance" the Executive power. I don't know what the philosophical basis of the idea is, but it seems to be very widespread; and it is certainly popularised by the media themselves and any other "estate" that may exist. It is not, I think, an idea which can be applicable to the BBC. As a public body created by a Royal Charter, it is part of the public and established institutions of the country. But there is also, of course, the fact that moods in the changing "climate of opinion" permeate the journalistic profession, and by osmosis, or by recruitment, or whatever, reach the body of BBC journalists.*

I think the problem that the new Director-General and the Governors of the BBC have to face is how to impose—is there any other word?—compliance with traditional BBC principles on all their broadcasters. And these traditional principles imply that one leaves political preferences at home in trying to arrive at the facts, thus concentrating one's professional abilities on sifting, confirming, selecting and presenting publicly available information as a record for the public, rather than engaging in investigative "journalism" which, by its very nature, is bound to involve one in personal commitment, in crusades and in campaigns.

The BBC should not be a campaigning organisation, because, after all, it can operate only within the framework of the law and of other institutions in the country.

KEDOURIE: In fact, the BBC has come very near to being a campaigning organisation in respect of this programme, *The Secret Society*, and in respect of an earlier programme on Irish terrorism in the Catholic and Protestant camps, *Real Lives*. People speaking on behalf of the BBC, or speaking from inside the BBC, have taken up very antagonistic positions towards the Government. It has set itself up as some kind of guardian of the public interest—but no news organisation can arrogate such a role to itself. And here we come back to the notion—which you say has come from America, I am not sure where it came from originally—that newspapers and broadcasting, "the media", constitute a Fourth Estate. I cannot see how this is justifiable. A newspaperman has no privileges over and above the rights and duties of his fellow-citizens. He cannot hold himself to be above the law.

I am certainly very puzzled at the pretensions of journalists who feel they have the right to withhold their sources of information, whether the information they have has been legally or illegally obtained. How can this be justified? How can they have arrogated this right? On occasion (in a famous New Jersey case, for instance, involving the *New York Times*, whose reporter wanted to withhold his notebooks which were required as evidence), the US courts have pronounced on this illegitimacy.

MANGO: *Again, I think that one must distinguish between societies where there is a redress in law, as in this country and the West generally, and societies where there is none. What would be considered as either sharp practice or arrogance in our society may be the only way, in other countries, of acquiring and disseminating information and facts which are of public utility. But to revert to your other point, about the BBC's* Real Lives *and* The Secret Society, *one must make distinctions and one must try to be legalistic.*

The position is that the BBC, as represented by its Board of Governors, decided at first not to transmit Real Lives, *which dealt with Protestant and Catholic extremists in Northern Ireland. And the BBC, as represented by its Director-General (who has since resigned) decided not to put out the programme in the series* The Secret Society, *on the so-called "Spy Satellite" (although this decision has since been reversed).*

What we have is not the BBC arrogating powers to itself, but the BBC not being able to control its own staff—and that, I think, is their main problem. Because, after all, the strike which took place within the BBC and the other media, against the temporary suppression of Real Lives, *was not a strike (although they pretended it was) against the Government, but a strike against the BBC's Board of Governors.*

I have no reason to believe that the Governors acted under pressure or, what is more to the point, believed that the programme, as it was originally and tendentiously compiled, was a proper programme to broadcast. It is the supreme body in the BBC. The traditional definition is that the Board of Governors are trustees for the nation; and the trustees decided that the programme was, in fact, improper.

Similarly, the Director-General, who is the servant of the Board of Governors, and basically the only interlocutor of the Board of Governors, decided originally that the programme on the so-called "Spy Satellite", should not go out; even though it will now be shown in the Autumn. So the question arises: why were these programmes made in the way they were?

KEDOURIE: Indeed, do you have an explanation as to how it

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was that the programmes were ever made? Why was editorial authorisation given? In one case, relating to unprecedented interviews with extremists who support terrorists—terrorists being people who bear arms against the lawful authority of this country—and, in the other case, making use of secret military information improperly obtained.

What boggles the imagination is how anybody in a position of editorial responsibility within the BBC should have even considered it possible for such a programme to be made under its aegis. At what point do bias and irresponsibility come in?

MANGO: *Before I answer that, I should ask another question. How is it that these programmes, after they had been made, and after their showing had been cancelled by the BBC, were then smuggled out to all sorts of interested individuals outside the Corporation? The Government, it seems, is concerned to find out who "the moles" were who disclosed secret information. I did not observe the BBC trying to find out which of its own staff allowed outsiders to have copies of programmes in which it holds the copyright and on which BBC money had been spent.*

The BBC is a decentralised organisation, and I think can only be effective as such. Decisions are made by producers and broadcasters, with reference, where necessary and possible, to heads of departments. It has been described by one eminent observer as a "cooperative of producers".

The only way this system can work is if all the staff are animated by some common principles. One obviously can't control everything beforehand to prevent wrong decisions being made, but what you can do is make sure that what in my time were called "the traditions of the BBC" (also called the "Reithian traditions") are observed.

Now the main tradition is that the BBC should not editorialise. The two main questions one always asked oneself were, in the case of a news story, "Is it the case, or is it not the case? Has it happened, or has it not happened?" In the case of opinion, "Who said it?"; attribute opinions with great care, and never introduce your own views into your broadcast.

I think that television has made it more difficult, indeed impossible, to keep one's face out of it, but also, because of the loose habits of the TV medium, to keep one's views out of it. Whereas the BBC had very few correspondents and no commentators, what we have now is a regiment of correspondents

Annan on "the State"

London

A CALL *for broadcasters to remember their obligations to the State was made yesterday by Lord Noël Annan, who chaired the committee on the Future of Broadcasting which published its report in 1977.*

He quoted one broadcaster to whom he had spoken saying:

"Patriotism is a shameful word to most of my colleagues. They think it is an emotion that leads to wars."

This, said Lord Annan, was an example of the way that distrust of authority and the determination to expose it were "the current orthodoxy". Yet,

"each of us owes duties to the State because it is the State that defines and sustains our rights through the laws of the country."

HIS REMARKS *came in a public lecture at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, to inaugurate a Fellowship established in memory of the veteran broadcaster Sir Huw Weldon, who died in 1986.*

Lord Annan said that Sir Huw, who rose from making programmes to become Managing Director of BBC television, always knew that the BBC would be judged around the world as speaking "not for the Government, but for Britain, for the State".

There was nothing new in the tension between broadcasters and politicians or in attempts by politicians to put pressure on to broadcasters. But broadcasters had to understand the distinction between the State and the Government and realise that, while the latter had no right to demand their loyalty, the former did.

"The state is the legal expression of the nation. It is the repository of sovereignty and the sole source of legal coercion. It is the source of authority for the armed forces. It is the agent of law."

HE CRITICISED *broadcasters—particularly the BBC—for failing to grasp that in the cases of both Northern Ireland and the Falklands War they owe "special duties" to the State. They were "singularly insensitive" if they did not realise how profoundly the Government was concerned and involved in Northern Ireland, and the BBC's attitude over the controversial documentary "Real Lives", so soon after the Brighton bombing, showed "an incredible insensitivity to the legitimate apprehensions of the politicians".*

There was praise, however. The BBC, he said, had handled the Miners' Strike "admirably" by giving Arthur Scargill time to explain his case, yet also showing that the pickets were attempting to break the law.

On the policy of "ostentatious neutrality" during the Falklands War, he said:

"The BBC cannot be impartial when British soldiers and sailors are in action and suffering casualties against an aggressor."

David Wastell

in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH *(London)*

NOËL ANNAN *is the author of a biography of Leslie Stephen (1951, rev. ed. 1984) and "Roxburgh of Stowe" (1965), amongst others. He was Provost of King's College, Cambridge, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of London. From 1974 to 1977 he was the Chairman of the Royal Committee which produced the influential report on "The Future of Broadcasting". He was created a Life Peer in 1965, and participates actively in the debates of the House of Lords.*

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and commentators, who, under the guise of "backgrounding a story" and "explaining a story" (or "interpreting" and "illuminating"), inevitably inject their own biased views into the story —and that, I believe, is dangerous. I have mentioned adjectives, but it goes beyond adjectives. It is this constant personalisation, this tendentious regurgitation of a story which seems to be the staple diet of television-news bulletins.

KEDOURIE: From what has been generally observed, it seems there has been a change in the "ethos" of the BBC. The question is: how this change took place, and when it took place. Some critics say it dates from the 1960s and the Director-Generalship of Sir Hugh Carleton Greene. What one can say—without access to any special inside information—is that at that time there was an erosion, if not a breakdown, of what could be called decorum and measure in the public stance of the BBC. Was it because these people came to look upon themselves as showmen and entertainers for the People? Or was it because they believed that the BBC and the media generally should be an instrument for "the liberation of mankind?", or for the emancipation of British society—whether by satire, four-letter words, muckraking or a mixture of fact and fiction called "faction"—from shackles which they considered to be old-fashioned and undesirable?

MANGO: *I think it came rather as an attempt at the self-liberation of BBC staff and journalists than of society in general. It was presented in the BBC, at the time, as a reaction against "stuffiness". That was the key word. BBC news bulletins were "stuffy", BBC programmes were said to be "stuffy". In other words, they were "dry", perhaps because they were factual and impersonal. Journalists, and broadcasters in general, were held in check.*

Now this reaction to "stuffiness", of course, endangered "decorum and measure" although, under the late Sir Hugh Greene, there were still fairly strict limits. More things were allowed than had been previously, but not "everything was permitted". The BBC reported aspects of, and possibly contributed to the "Permissive Society", but internally it was not yet an arena of permissiveness. That came later with the gradual erosion of authority of the BBC hierarchy, and also as a result of general social pressures from outside.

We see quite a lot in the press, particularly the liberal press, about, or rather against, the critical interventions of Mr Norman Tebbit, a leading figure in the Conservative Party. To be sure, before the Conservatives raised their voices against the BBC, for years the main professional critic of the BBC was a Left-wing academic organisation, the Glasgow Media Group. It criticised the BBC constantly for apparently not being fair enough to Labour, and in particular to trade-union strikers, in its reports of the industrial scene. Some of the statistics and conclusions of the Glasgow Media Group have recently been challenged by an eminent academic. But they did have an impact.

Naturally, there are people in the BBC who say that if they are criticised both from the Right and from the Left, then they must be on a more or less middle course. I don't think that this follows.

KEDOURIE: You mentioned Lord Reith and his long era at the helm of the BBC. It is now the case that Reith is rarely mentioned except with a sneer; and I think that this is symptomatic. Could one go further and say that as a result of this permissiveness which, it seems to me, has taken over, the BBC has become an instrument of corruption in the same way that "Bloomsbury" did?

MANGO: *No, I don't think so. For a start a very small part of the BBC output has been criticised. The BBC, to use an expression I heard used by Sir William Rees-Mogg (as he then was) is "a great production house". In other words, the BBC produces not only the unexceptionable World Service and foreign-language broadcasts, but the excellent Radio Three and Radio Four which give very little offence and much instruction and pleasure to many people.*

There are many excellent things on television, too. It is very good on classics—I know that Mr Alasdair Milne has been quoted as being contemptuous of the tradition that "all-the-BBC-is-good-for-is-Dickens-and-cricket"—but it does Dickens and cricket extremely well, and natural life, archaeology, and many other things. The number of controversial programmes is fairly small, and the corrosive, Bloomsbury-type attitude to which you refer, makes itself felt in only a segment of the BBC output.

But to revert to what we said about the absence of authority: if central authority, the authority of the hierarchy and of principles, is eroded, it is not so much anarchy but a carve-up that follows. Other people come in to fill the void. Amongst these are the trade unions—the National Union of Journalists, for example.

Now, when I say that BBC hierarchy finds it very difficult to control its own staff, as a former BBC manager myself, I know how extremely hard it is, within existing house agreements, Union pressures and the ethos of the profession, to do so. It is by no means an easy job, particularly in a grey area where so much depends on your interpretation of a phrase, of an inflection, of a look in television, unless all the parties to a discussion are animated by a consensus of shared principles.

KEDOURIE: I agree that it is impossible to have meticulous control of the hierarchy. But is a principled attitude at all possible in the absence of, or with the erosion of, editorial and intellectual self-control?

MANGO: *Hardly. I think that unless the BBC or the new Director-General succeed, in creating a climate within the BBC where a modern equivalent of the old ethos is accepted, then inevitably the BBC as constituted will be in danger. Then the acceptance of, say, the Belgian, or the German system, may become inevitable. That would be a loss. The choice of individuals for particular jobs would be dictated by their known political preferences; and their professional competence would be given less weight than it should be. A situation would arise such as that prevailing in the United Nations—where, if you are*

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a Mauritanian, then all avenues of promotion are open to you because the number of other Mauritanians with adequate qualifications is very small. So if you are going to give jobs to people on the ideological basis of their party allegiances, then you may have some very unfortunate appointments.

Unless BBC staff consciously try to divest themselves of the tendentiousness of their own views—to relearn the professional self-discipline of objectivity, fairness, straight reporting—then obviously some sort of formal balancing mechanism will become necessary. Unless, of course, the organisation itself is destroyed. This, to my mind, would be an incalculable loss to the cultural life of the country, and also the loss of a service which this country renders to the outside world. "Credibility" is a word I don't like. I think the proper word to characterise the classic achievement, now showing cracks and crumbles, is "truthful" as in truthful information.

AUTHORS

George Urban, until recently Director of Radio Free Europe, graduated from the University of Budapest in 1947 and in 1956 obtained his Ph.D. at the University of London. He served with the BBC from 1958-60 and then as director of university broadcasting and academic consultant for RFE, on whose behalf this conversation was recorded. Among numerous other publications, he has edited *Détente* (1976), *Hazards of Learning* (1977), and *Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World* (1982), all published by Maurice Temple Smith. Many of the extended conversations which appear in his books had their first publication in ENCOUNTER.

James Lasdun's collection of short stories, *The Silver Age* (Jonathan Cape, 1985), won the Dylan Thomas Award. His collection of poetry *Jump Start* was published by Secker & Warburg in 1987. "The Jump" will appear in Hodder & Stoughton's *20 Under 35* anthology which is published this October.

C. M. Woodhouse writes: "For some of the data in my article I am indebted to the following, with many thanks: Gerald Fleming (Emeritus Reader in German at the University of Sussex); Robert Fisk (*The Times*); Hubertus Czernin (*Profil*, Vienna); Gerasimos Apostolatos (formerly a Minister in the Greek Government); Mrs Turcan (sister of Captain Jock Hamilton); and Captain J. E. Lawson, who was perhaps the last of my officers (then an NCO) to see Captain Warren alive. . . ."

John Greening has published two collections of poems—*Westerners* (Hippopotamus Press, 1982) and *Winter Journeys* (Rivelin Press, 1984). Another collection, *The Tutankhamun Variations*, will be brought out by Bloodaxe Books next year.

Jean-François Revel, the French philosopher and critic, writes a regular column for *Le Point* in Paris. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

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Walter Laqueur is a Professor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University and Chairman of its International Research Council; he is also co-director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London. His numerous books include *Breaking the Silence* (The Bodley Head and Simon & Schuster, 1986), *A World of Secrets* (Basic Books and Weidenfeld, 1986), *Germany Today* (Weidenfeld, 1985) and *Young Germany* (Transaction Books, 1985).

Ed. Note: The widely-discussed article on "Why Khrushchev Failed" by Fyodor Burlatsky (ENCOUNTER, May) was translated from the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, of which there is now an English language edition distributed in the West. All copyright requests should be referred directly to the *Gazette*'s editors.

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SPORT

The Playing-Fields of Potsdam

Of Hope & Tawdry Glory—By MARK ALMOND

"Sebastian Coe gave up his usual training run alongside the Berlin Wall yesterday to visit Dresden's renowned Centre of Sports Medicine."

Daily Telegraph (*6 April 1988*)

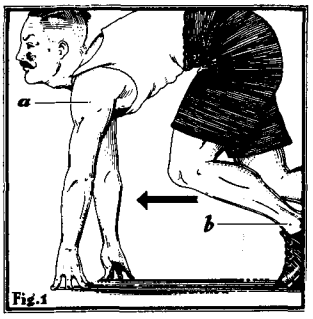

Fig.1

ON EASTER MONDAY, this year, Colin Moynihan (Mrs Thatcher's Minister of Sport) and Sebastian Coe (one of Britain's world-class athletes, and also one of the vice-presidents of the British Sports Council) arrived in East Berlin on a fact-finding visit. Mr Moynihan assured the press, "We have come to a country which has clearly excelled. We have come to look and learn" (*The Times*). With this he set the tone for the rest of their tour. What may turn out to have been a minor touristic classic in that resilient genre, "fellow-travelling", was recorded by correspondents from *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Independent*.[1] We may be confident that they reported little that was not told to the visitors by at least one East German official. While much of what follows might have been witnessed at any time in the last 70 years, it is important to remember the specific piquancy of the Moynihan-Coe visit. Today's fellow-travelling comes from the Right.

In retrospect, the golden age of fellow-travelling in this area was never very sophisticated. Most of the visitors ("Friends of the German Democratic Republic", and looking like it) had little influence on Western governments or even public opinion. A sprinkling of Fabian Quakers and Nobel Prize winners in the most abstract sciences could not make the image of Ulbricht, the Wall, and the ubiquitous *Vopos* less grim. However, even the Party members among them seem not to have understood Lenin's dictum that a sympathiser in the enemy camp, however conditional, may be more valuable than an open ally. Mikhail Gorbachov's flattering tryst with Mrs Thatcher at Brize Norton last December (an hour or so on a refuelling stop in a local airport) is only the most recent example of Lenin's artfulness in practice. More than 30 years ago, Walter Ulbricht recognised that the GDR needed friends and could only get them by unconventional means.

Sporting success has given more international recognition and legitimacy to the East Germans than any of their barbed-wire fences, automatic firing-devices, minefields and guard-dogs could ever have done. It has even obscured their existence and reduced the dog-runs around the Berlin Wall to a jogging track for superstars. Already by 1971, Erich Honecker could tell his Party Congress: "Our state is respected in the world . . . because of the excellent performances of our top athletes." By 1988, the regular cascades of medals in almost every sport had given rise to a Western desire to emulate East German achievements, if necessary by imitating the GDR's methods.

30 YEARS AGO, fellow-travellers fell over themselves to justify the poverty of the East by emphasising its "greater equality". Today's visitors only have time for the local élites and their success. None the less, a deep affinity unites these generations of travellers, regardless of their political differences: each betrays a profound indifference to the real life of East Germany, as lived by "the masses".

The old stereotypes have been inverted. It is no longer the Soviet bloc's secrets which lie shrouded in mystery.

"I could hardly believe it when they started showing me the results of [drugs] tests they have done recently on Olympic champions here", Coe told the *Independent*'s Neil Wilson after his visit to Dresden. "I was shown the sort of personal data which would have been *jealously guarded from me in Britain* [emphasis added]." When the British press party met Volker Ranke, the vice-president of the East German Gymnastics and Sports Union (*DTSB*), Michael Calvin of the *Daily Telegraph* described "a forceful figure dressed in a fashionable Western leather-jacket . . . the antithesis of the dour administrator generally associated with the Eastern Bloc". One of Ranke's prize exhibits, the Olympic oarsman, Olaf Foerster, made his appearance "dressed in the stone-washed jeans that are the symbol of Western contact achieved through sports". Meanwhile Katerina Witt, the skater, was on hand to tell all about her night-clubbing in Cuba to John Goodbody of *The Times*.

[1] Other newspapers, including the Communist *Morning Star*, maintained a discreet silence about the visit.

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AMID THIS GALAXY of sporting talent and designer-clothes, the balding figure of Egon Krenz (himself hardly older than the *Demokratische Republik*) was the object of the confident prophecies of Western sports journalists that he would soon represent his country at the highest level. Describing the meeting ("the longest ever with a member of the Politburo") between Britain's own up-and-coming Colin Moynihan and Egon Krenz, John Goodbody noted the significance of

> ". . . the popularity of sport in this country. . . . In Britain the Minister of Sport is not a member of the cabinet; in East Germany, Krenz, whose portfolio includes youth affairs, security affairs and sport, is regarded as a likely successor to Erich Honecker, the country's leader" (*The Times*).

Only Michael Calvin in *The Daily Telegraph* drew attention to the "rapidly increasing tension between the Lutheran Church and the Communist state". Calvin did not mention Krenz's security role, nor that it was since he took control of the *Stasi* last autumn that Church-State relations have steadily worsened, culminating in police raids on churches during the week preceding the British party's Easter visit. However, readers of *The Daily Telegraph* did learn that "it is considered impossible for an active Christian to represent the German Democratic Republic in international sport."

Nobody seems to have briefed Mr Moynihan about these events or about the implications of his host's many-sided activities. Nor does it seem to have entered his head to ask what impression his much publicised "lengthy and cordial" discussions would have made on the East German public. Just as a crackdown was under way, its organiser could be seen chatting with Mrs Thatcher's representative: the West's indifference to the fate of ordinary church-goers (as well as the ecologists and the pacifists who are also at the rough end of Herr Krenz's portfolio) could not have been more harshly illustrated.

Without distracting his readers with the details of Herr Krenz's recent activities, which have put him within a heartbeat of vaulting into the GDR's top job, John Goodbody admitted to readers of *The Times* that "many people in Britain may deplore" the "link between sports and politics"—but the East German model was "effective and leads to little wastage of talent or money. . . ." The shameless waste of both in Britain was condemned by Moynihan, who contrasted the United Kingdom's "diffuse and bureaucratic" approach with the "streamlining here" (*The Times*). Sebastian Coe was as impressed by the boarding-schools for budding champions as his Minister:

"The school is the centre of sport in East Germany, and it is clearly failing to be that in the United Kingdom"; and he saw "nothing sinister" in the GDR's drafting twelve-year-olds into them . . . after all parental consent is always obtained first.

Neil Wilson explained to readers of the *Independent* how these élite schools' "flexible approach to sporting excellence is the key to East Germany's medal success". Take for instance, the career of the leather and denim-clad Olaf Foerster. Having been spotted as a child for a potential breast-stroke champion, he had been trained until his height ruled him out of the pool. Not to worry, his talents were redeployed at the coxless fours.

A great deal was made out of Foerster's successful switch from one sport to another. As Goodbody told readers of *The Times*, "The state had already invested a great deal in his development, so his ability could not be wasted. . . ." However, statistics repeated from certain GDR sources suggest that if no talent is wasted, a great deal of potential never comes to fruition. Even the official statistics suggest that of 10,000 draftees to the *Sportsinternate*, only 3,000 graduate[2]; and only 400 go on to Olympic competition—where, to be sure, one in three wins a medal.

In their pursuit of excellence, neither Moynihan nor Coe had time for the failures and drop-outs from this system. The British press only reported the assurances of Herr Ranke about the long-term prospects of his *successful* athletes:

"Material security for athletes *does depend on their performances* and after their sporting careers they are integrated into society."

Needless to add, "Coe was impressed [by] . . . a file of all the former Olympic medal winners, with details of exactly what job they are now doing" (*The Times*). Pity that this sociological *glasnost* did not extend to those who failed in earlier heats.

Despite Volker Ranke's assurances about the academic quality of the education in the *Sportsinternate* (compulsory Marxism-Leninism plus Gym), his comment that "Somebody who is stupid will never become a champion", reflects his indifference to those of his charges who allow their own youthful enthusiasm for their chosen sport to reinforce the pressures to concentrate on it alone. When they fail to make the sporting grade, their lack of basic qualifications, plus the state's turning of its back on them, plunges them to the bottom of East Germany's social pile, where the only "leather" jackets are made of Czech plastic. Anybody who has met the embittered Olympic gardeners and drop-outs of the GDR's backstreets might conceivably question the morality, let alone the practical worth of such a system. Of course, those who don't make the Olympic grade, but pass their tests in Marxism-Leninism can go on to be coaches. Some are even able to put their specialist sporting skills to professional use: the border guards always have room for marksmen.

THE CONVENTIONAL ILLUSION that East Germany is a state filled with super-fit young people is difficult for any unchaperoned visitor to sustain. Punk has yet to go out of fashion, and solvent abuse is as much a theme for "social concern" in Weimar as in the most depressed areas of Britain. Even local sociologists note the apathy of young people, towards sport in particular. This attitude actually reflects the growing rejection of the militarisation of life in East

[2] To the Leipzig Sport University. Its internationalist alumni (for example, Sam Ramsamy, chairman of the anti-South African sports boycott, SANROC) play a major role in the World Sport movement.

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Germany. School students throughout the Soviet bloc take an obligatory course to make them "Fit for Labour and the Defence of the Motherland" (it involves learning to throw hand-grenades). Since 1978, the GDR has had the additional subject *Wehrkunde* (Military Studies) for boys *and* girls in the ninth and tenth classes.[3] Furthermore, in addition to performing military service (and no conscientious objections are allowed), young men hoping for a career of any kind are expected to "volunteer" for the paramilitary "Society for Sport and Technology".

All this obligatory drill leaves little time or enthusiasm for sport, which is fortunate because East Germany is not blessed with facilities for general use. At one point, it seemed that Colin Moynihan had realised that beyond the walls of the élite sports schools all might not be well on the playing-fields of Potsdam.

> "It is a myth to believe that the East German success rests on very expensive and highly-sophisticated facilities, ours are often in much better shape" (*The Times*).

Why, there are only thirteen ice-rinks in the GDR compared with fifty in Britain (*Independent*). Unfortunately, the Minister's conclusion seems to have been that ours were being enjoyed by all and sundry—while East Germany's had produced the likes of World Champion, Katerina Witt.[4]

Was the lesson that Colin Moynihan came away with from East Berlin the need for *Gleichschaltung* in British sport and education?

> "If it is possible to change the system in Britain, the time is now. I am confident we can be radical if we act this year."

Referring to the Sports Council as "an executive arm" of the British government (*Daily Telegraph*), Mr Moynihan offered a vision of British sporting success modelled on East Germany's.

Certainly, it has been clear since 1936 that de Coubertin's ideals at the Olympic level are dead. However, it is touching to recall how few British medal-winners at Hitler's Olympics allowed their justified envy of the training facilities available to their German rivals to turn into admiration of the system which produced their success. Today the empire-building ambitions of hardy Wilsonian *apparatchiki* and the commercialisation of Western sportsmen, backed up by Blimpish demands for tawdry Olympic glory, have produced a remarkable synthesis.

Behind all the talk of structural change in imitation of the Soviet bloc, there lies a ceaseless demand for money. The GDR spends 2% of its GNP on sport[5]; and it is easy to see why . . . if we consider the system of "special sports medical teams" available "day or night" to deal with an athlete's crises: "If the problem continues . . . then a council of medical advisers is formed, including the sports doctor, team doctor and two or three other people who have a specific knowledge of the particular ailment." Sebastian Coe might think that "there are not massive financial implications in the system", but would Mrs Thatcher agree?

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[3] G. E. Edwards (from Britain's nearest equivalent to the Leipzig Sport University, Loughborough), translates this term as "defence studies", pointing out that it involves "seventy-two periods . . . on civil and national defence and includes first aid and military drill, training and discipline. It augments the activities of the 'Society for Sport and Technology' (*GFST*) to which 90% of young men . . . belong on a *voluntary basis*." (*GDR: Facts and Figures*, London, 1985). It is, by the way, illegal to photograph these volunteers at their games.

[4] Dr Ian Thompson, a lecturer in sport at the University of Stirling, returned from a rationed and unheated Romania in February to present an even more favourable balance for Communism versus Thatcherism. Nicolae Ceauşescu's "19 universities offer 4,166 sports bursaries. In Britain, the 46 universities make available fewer than 30" (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 February). Shouldn't we be tightening our belts to produce our own Nadia Comaneci?

[5] See John Ardagh, *Germany and the Germans: An Anatomy of Society Today* (Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 334.

FORTUNATELY, Colin Moynihan's vision of countless talent-scouts touring Britain's schools and despatching talented infants to state boarding-schools seems destined to remain a pipe-dream. Fabian egalitarian objections may no longer cut much ice in Britain, but the present government's old-fashioned liberal notions about public spending and personal freedom are likely to preserve what is left of the amateur ideal. That ideal used to be identified with this country. It is a pity that Messrs Moynihan and Coe did not express the same confidence in it as did their East German hosts in their beliefs. What could they reply to Volker Ranke when he told them (*Daily Telegraph*), "I am a Communist. I believe in my system"? Perhaps only that, without being communists, they believed in it too.

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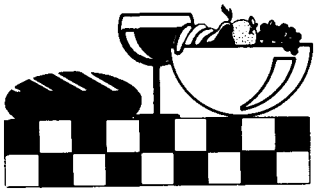
MEMOIR

Remembering Raymond Postgate

Revolutionary, Pacifist, Classicist & Gourmet—

By John Postgate



To the developing child, the parent is the whole world, and it is only very gradually that the child begins to see the parent in the context of other people—to recognise uniqueness, virtues, and foibles. My first realisation that there was something frighteningly unique about my father took place when I was about six or seven years old; he met me from school and chose to talk to me about God. After some preliminary remarks he spoke the following words: "God is a creature. . . ."

I interrupted, horrified, for "creatures" in my language were animals, and to refer thus to God was, according to my training, to invite a bolt of lightning or similar retribution.

"You mustn't say that!" I cried, terrified for him.

My passion must have stopped my father's train of thought. We halted. He looked at me solemnly and said, very slowly and clearly: "God is a creature which some people have invented. . . ."

The rest is lost from my memory; he probably said something like "to cover their ignorance of reality", or "to impose socially bearable behaviour on their fellows"; even, perhaps, "to prop up the capitalist system"—though I don't think his socialism was ever really that naive. But the full message that he wished to convey is gone, because I received a much greater one: here was a man who could quietly question the reality of God and, far from turning into a pillar of salt or being struck by a thunderbolt, could continue to walk with me along Shirehall Lane, Hendon, talking of this and that, and, in due course, have supper. The seeds of my atheism were sown, and my fear of the vengeful God of the Christians was exorcised.

I am now sure that this conversation was no accident. Anxious lest his son should become entrapped in mysticism, he performed the domestic equivalent of Charles Bradlaugh's challenges to the Deity before his Victorian audiences: he demanded the wrath of God, and it did not come.

My father called himself an "atheist" although, if hard pressed, I think he would have admitted to agnosticism. His objections to religion were philosophical, reinforced by politics: he saw the Christian Church, particularly its Catholic sect, as a basically reactionary, oppressive force throughout history, second in iniquity only to Islam. He had no time for Judaism and regarded the other world religions, and their rivalries, as fundamentally trivial, albeit often catastrophic, distractions in the march of human history. He had enormous sympathy with the struggles of the Irish Free State, but for wholly political reasons: he saw its existence as "a triumph of the exploited masses over their landlord-oppressors". He had no sympathy for its religious component at all. For him, the real problems of mankind were not with God or the Gods but with one another: with justice, fair shares, equality of opportunity, and freedom from slavery and exploitation. What the world needed was not prayer or divine intervention, but peace, health, hygiene, mutual consideration, kindness, and, above all, democracy: social, economic, and political.

In short, he was a humanist. He thought of himself as a political animal, and his political views coloured the greater part of his outlook, although he never sought political office. He had no desire to stand for parliament or local government. His ostensible reason was that he disliked having to make speeches. This was true, and I think that dislike counted to some extent, but I am sure that his major demotivation arose from impatience with the day-to-day distortions, prevarications, and deviations from principle which are required of the true politician.

Political journalism, on the other hand, provided the opportunity to prescribe and criticise without *too* much involvement in the tedious manoeuvres needed to transform a political policy into reality. Not, I must add, that he was other than stubbornly dedicated to his principles. He disapproved of the First World War and, as a result, the normal career openings for one of his background were irreversibly closed to him. For he refused to be conscripted, went briefly to prison as a conscientious objector; and then, on the run from the police, was sent down from St John's College, Oxford, where he held a Scholarship in Classics. His relations with his father, whom he loved and respected deeply, deteriorated badly and in due course he was disinherited.

His father was Professor John Percival Postgate, classicist, editor of *Corpus Poetarum Latinorum* (Bell & Son, 1905, 1920), prescriber of the modern pronunciation of Latin, and author of a school Latin Grammar which preceded and rivalled Kennedy's ("Now, children, take out

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your Postgates . . .''). Ray had enjoyed (I mean it) a strict but happy Victorian upbringing: a severe, remote, but ultimately admirable father, a loving and supportive mother, and an elder sister (later Dame Margaret Cole) with whom he had an almost telepathic bond of understanding and affection despite the fact that, years later, she remembered him—in print—as "stubborn and quarrelsome". He had three younger brothers and a younger sister. The family lived in pleasant houses, first in Cambridge, later Liverpool, and later still Cambridge again. They also had servants so that the children rarely did a hand's turn for themselves. (This is not a criticism. In the first couple of this century's decades, that was the way of middle-class life. In those days, unlike now, a Professor's socio-economic class was distinctly upper-middle-class.)

A side effect was that my father was far from practical. Unscrewing a screw, hammering in a nail, mending a bicycle tyre—even washing-up, or opening a tin—were operations not to be embarked upon lightly, for they usually ended in disaster. After a brief skirmish with the motor car, in the late 1920s, he gave up trying to drive; throughout his life his wife, Daisy, was his driver. Even his cooking, of which he was proud, had haphazard elements: things got burned or broken; dishes came out oddly, sometimes deliciously so, because an excess of cream or wine had inadvertently been added; always, to Daisy's inevitable complaint, a mighty wall of soiled dishes, pots, plates, spoons and cooking utensils occupied the sink and its surroundings by the time he had finished.

At Oxford he was taught, and much influenced by a brilliant young Guild Socialist, G. D. H. Cole (who later married Ray's sister Margaret) and befriended by the liberal-minded Hellenist don, Gilbert Murray (who sheltered him briefly when he was on the run from the police). He had already been influenced, in the sixth form at Liverpool College, by Cole's writings as well as by those of Lenin and Marx. He had seen turbulence, strikes, and poverty among the working classes of Liverpool and he regarded himself as a full-blooded Guild socialist; on being called up he declared the War to be an "imperialist, capitalist plot" and refused to go. At his tribunal he refused to plead other than political objections to the War. In those days only religious beliefs were regarded as conscientious reasons for pacifism. So he was sent to prison —for only about three weeks, in fact, because his health became poor. His father was horrified and, as I said, ultimately disowned him. But their correspondence—for his father's letters to him from this period are among the very few papers which my father chose to leave undestroyed before he died—albeit argumentative, was courteous, stern, and affectionate. They discuss moral and social issues from an entrenched position, and one can deduce from the context that my father responded in similar vein; both obstinately regretting the other's stubbornness.

He did not meet my mother until the War was about to end, while he was doing journalistic work for George Lansbury's *The Herald*. Daisy was one of Lansbury's several daughters; they fell in love and were married in 1918, just before the Armistice.

My father played a seminal part in the history of the political Far Left during the 1920s. He was a founder member of the Communist Party of Great Britain but broke away "noisily" within a couple of years over its centralised discipline, though not before replacing Francis (later Sir Francis) Meynell as Editor of its journal, *The Communist*. He became a socialist journalist and writer, inclining very briefly to the revolutionary Left, but soon working with relative moderates such as his Christian father-in-law, George Lansbury, on *The Herald* and later on Lansbury's *Labour Weekly*. He published books and pamphlets on socialist theory and revolution: *The Bolshevik Theory; Karl Marx; How To Make A Revolution* (the last-named was not a handbook for revolutionaries but rather a tract against violent revolution, distilled from his historian's view of, particularly, the French and Russian revolutions). He also wrote and published critical studies of unconventional historical figures: John Wilkes, Robert Emmett, Dr Johnson.

Most of the actual writing, as distinct from the research, was done in his study, which was the sitting-room of our little semi-detached house in Hendon. Its walls, including the window alcove, were completely covered with bookshelves, all full. This library consisted largely of historical works, some rare and valuable, carefully arranged according to period and country. The French revolutions occupied about three shelves; there were also a fair number of Latin and Greek classics as well as a shelf or two of books in French, largely novels or political works. Several shelves were occupied by political and journalistic matter but there was rather little English literature and poetry. Instead, there were many contemporary novels and detective stories. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (to which he was a contributing Editor) occupied a little glass-fronted bookcase on its own. There were some dictionaries and other works of reference and, unobtrusive but in due course discovered by his prurient-minded offspring, a few erotica (frustratingly in French or German).

Ray added steadily to his library throughout his life; it accompanied him to his larger house in Finchley (about 1933) without effort, but required a special room to be built for it in his retirement house near Canterbury (about 1969). For a small boy in the late 1920s it was a boring collection; yet I recall that it included some huge green volumes—bound copies of the *Daily Herald*. In these I would look up early episodes of the tale of Bobby Bear, a children's cartoon serial, even discovering that it was preceded by a short-lived serial called *Hank, The Real Cowboy*. How's that for the children of the enlightened Left in the early 1920s?

The ostensible author of Bobby Bear was a member of the staff of *The Herald* called Aunt Kitsie, who wrote a small column for children, and to whom I once wrote a letter. Imagine my dismay when, on a visit to my father's office, I was introduced to "Aunt Kitsie"—who proved to be male. Ray was Foreign Editor of *The Herald* in its early days (with no responsibility for Aunt Kitsie) but by the late 1920s, when the Trades Union Congress had taken responsibility for it as *The Daily Herald*, he was no longer with it full time but only occasionally; largely, as I recall, on a freelance basis.

In the 1930s he became European Representative of a progressive US publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, and visited the US

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twice around 1930. As a result he did quite a lot of book-reviewing, many of the books being detective fiction of the classic kind: short on characterisation but complex as a whodunnit. I do not recall seeing a written review, though he certainly wrote them, tapping them out laboriously with two or three fingers on an ancient typewriter. Many, I suppose, were private reports for Knopf, advising him whether to buy the US rights or not.

I remember my father briefly welcoming, but later disapproving, the swing away from straight whodunnit to tough, fast action and violence, initiated in the mid-30s by Leslie Charteris (the *Saint* series) and Dashiel Hammett. At this time detective stories were the in-thing among Ray's associates. Ray's sister Margaret and her husband G. D. H. Cole had been bitten by the fad. Ray was rather late getting started but his *Verdict of Twelve* rapidly became a classic of its kind. Only the Coles were a bit snide about it, saying that he had used up sufficient plots for twelve detective novels in one book. Ray wrote few works of fiction. His first was a semi-autobiographical novel of emotional relationships called *No Epitaph* (*Felix and Anne* in the USA) about which he became a trifle shame-faced in later years. But he was immensely proud of it when it first came out in 1933: I still remember him showing me its opening paragraph because he rightly thought it would appeal to me. It began:

> "Waterbeetles in the sun ran up and down the surface of the river as if they were occupied on a very serious business. The water was a thick green with a rather slimy surface. The current ran very slowly and evenly. There were strong weeds near the surface which made long straight unwavering lines in lighter green under the water. A small boy watched the beetles intently from the bridge."

Water skaters, actually. Ray's indifferent biology reflected his almost total lack of scientific or technical education. He was aware of this lack, yet as a progressive and politically conscious person, he felt obliged to keep up with progress. So he had problems. His ideas on medicine and human physiology had an almost medieval quality. Wine was a good cure-all; brandy for emergencies. I recall the bewildered remonstrations of a Danish waiter when, on a holiday at Tisvilde, north of Copenhagen, he ordered a stiff brandy at 11 a.m. and insisted that I, a twelve-year-old, drink it all. This was his cure for the diarrhoea from which I was suffering.

Like many *bons vivants* he found that exercise and sudden movement often brought on a touch of acid indigestion, a phenomenon which he interpreted as due to "a rush of lactic acid to the stomach".[1] He was somewhat surprised by my own scientific bent (I became a professional scientist in adult life) and, although respectful of my abstruse information, nevertheless regarded me as basically uneducated and barely literate. He scarcely recognised his own complementary imbalance: that he was uneducated in a vast area of human knowledge and endeavour to the extent of hardly comprehending its methods and thought-patterns.

Nevertheless, he did have technico-scientific interests. Some time in the late '20s he became involved in "wirelesses" and versions of these came and went from our house. Perhaps he was reviewing them? Anyway, "wirelesses" were the only technological things that he treated with some degree of casual familiarity and he not only encouraged me to build my own crystal set but pretended not to notice when I listened to it under my pillow instead of going to sleep at nights. He also had a brush with photography, largely because a friend with whom he shared an office, Mr Lipman, was an enthusiast and showed him how much cheaper it was to develop and print one's own photographs instead of paying a chemist shop to do so. That is why so few decent pictures of him and his family remain: if one got the temperature or timing just a little wrong the negatives came out cleanly pale or totally black. He firmly taught me how to develop my own photos, with equally disastrous results.

A GOOD FRIEND of both my parents was a wealthy young man, Rudolph Messel, who wished to use some of his inherited wealth to further "the cause of socialism". With a group of film buffs prepared to do some amateur acting, including Ray and Daisy, he formed and financed the Socialist Film Council. Its object was to make propaganda films, to be shown at meetings of the Labour Party, Cooperatives, Trade Unions, and so on. The early films were silent, 16mm products. One, *What The Newsreel Doesn't Show*, was what its title suggests: news material which the commercial newsreels considered impolitic. *The Road To Hell* was a two-reeler on the dreadful effects of the means test (for social-security benefit) on a working-class family. The father (played by Ray) is injured in a car accident (Messel as the drunk, playboy driver; my mother as his girl), and gets the sack but remains ineligible for benefit (marvellous histrionics from Naomi Mitchison as the distraught mother). These were made in the early 1930s, using a camera donated by Sir Stafford Cripps. In the mid-'30s the SFC got more ambitious and made a 35mm anti-war film with sound, called *Blow Bugles Blow*. I never saw it and to the best of my knowledge no copies remain, but I was told by my mother that its message was to the effect that "international workers' solidarity could prevent war by enabling simultaneous general strikes in the potentially belligerent countries".

Ray had a good photogenic appearance in the films I saw of him, for he was good-looking though with a rather frog-like face; a tall, well-built man, somewhat on the heavy side. In his motor accident scene the film required him to be hit by the playboy's car, which then drives away, leaving Ray in a pool of blood in the road. For black-and-white photography, in those days, tomato ketchup or red paint was unsuitable as mock-blood because it photographed too black. A brown fluid was necessary and, for Ray, brown sherry was chosen. He had to fill his mouth with brown sherry and spit it out as he fell. Unfortunately, takes were often delayed and he swallowed it. My mother told me that they *did eventually* get a good take of that episode, but that was the end of filming for the day.

[1] Lactic acid, in the 1920s, was just starting to be recognised by biological scientists as a substance intimately involved in muscle metabolism and therefore exercise; it has no part in digestion.

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Despite taking a dramatic tumble in *The Road To Hell*, Ray was never really athletic. But I do remember, from when I was very young, his engaging in a friendly boxing bout in the back garden, with bare torso and boxing gloves, with some visiting uncle or pseudo-uncle. I ran indoors in tears, I am told. He never did it again to my knowledge; in later years he played a little clumsy tennis, some rather more expert badminton, and took up cycling.

CYCLING WAS, for a while, the family thing. In the late 1930s Ray registered the whole family with the Cyclists' Touring Club and took us on cycling tours for our holidays. The holiday which became part of the family legend was our cycling tour of France in 1937. France was then the Englishman's near-paradise: gastronomically marvellous and amazingly cheap. It was also "the crucible of liberty", so both my parents loved France and the French, and regarded the uniformly dreadful toilet facilities as an excusable aberration against which one armed oneself with toilet paper, scents, and medicines.

So we assembled our bikes, clothes for three weeks in nice new saddle-bags, and set off by boat and train (via Newhaven) to just south of Paris: La Ferté Alais. With cousin Peter Thurtle and his young wife Kate, we set off cycling in a south-westerly direction.

Gradually, my father's well-laid plan revealed itself: we made good time, with a brief train journey through relatively dull terrain, until we reached Beaune. Then we cycled slowly north to Dijon, pausing respectfully at various villages or vineyards bearing the names of Burgundy's greatest wines: Nuits St Georges, Chambertin, Musigny, Clos Vougeot. My recollection is a blur of sunshine, and of marvellous food and wine.

MY FATHER'S FORTUNES were at a very low ebb at that time; in retrospect he nevertheless managed to provide the family with perhaps the most memorable holiday of their lives and, at the same time, satisfy his political, cultural, and gastronomic predilections.

Despite his rebellion against his own father, my parent retained quite a number of so-called "Victorian" outlooks. Children should not be allowed too much choice; they should eat what they were given and do what they were told to do (though they might be consulted before the final decision was taken). They should have certain domestic duties, and entertainment should be instructional. A visit abroad—a rare treat—required that one should learn at least a smattering of the language and mealtimes were a good opportunity for practice. Playing badminton, we would score in French, Spanish, Latin—even, before a trip with the Fabians to the USSR, in Russian.

My father believed strongly in the beneficial effects of good wine on both health and sodality. Therefore, from a very young age (about seven, I think) my brother and I were allowed, on Sundays and special days, tastes of whatever wine was available. So it was entirely consistent of him to decide, when I had grown up, married, and had three daughters, to extend such education to his grand-daughters. What he chose to do was to lay down a dozen of good claret at the birth of each grand-daughter, for me to hold in trust until she reached the age of fourteen, when it would become her property to drink (over a civilised period, of course). He chose, helped by his friend Louis Vialard, *Chateau Cissac 1953*, a *cru bourgeois* which was of quite exceptional quality in that year and likely to last. All went well for several years but then trial tastings showed that the wine was at its peak and might well not last, after all, until the fourteenth years of the two younger girls.

What to do?

My father solved the problem with characteristic generosity: he authorised my wife and me to drink it. We had a marvellous few years. He selected some more, of a different year, for my daughters' inheritances—providing, because he was by then more affluent than before, *two* dozen each.

ONE OF THE GREAT FIGURES in my father's life was his father-in-law, George Lansbury, a socialist egalitarian of the old school, a Christian, a teetotaller uninterested in good living, and a non-intellectual accepted by the working people of East London as one of themselves (despite a somewhat bourgeois family origin).

Ray was fiery, intellectual, obstinate, and uneasy among the masses; their only common ground was their socialism. Yet despite their contrasting outlooks, Ray had an abiding respect and love for Lansbury which transcended the political differences which must have arisen between them, particularly in the late '30s. George Lansbury was, for example, a dedicated pacifist who supported Appeasement unreservedly and made tremendous efforts to prevent the 1939 War; Ray, alerted by the Spanish Civil War, horrified by Hitler's (and Stalin's) concentration-camps, and satisfied that negotiation with a maniacal dictator was impossible, had no reservations about the War and after September 1939 rapidly joined the Local Defence Volunteers (later the Home Guard). This attitude to the conflict, a reversal of his view of the 1914-18 War, caused a considerable subsidiary conflict in Ray's family because his two sons, doubtless influenced by Lansbury, took up pacifist positions: I only briefly, Oliver following father's footsteps by going to prison for a while, much to his ex-pacifist parent's disapproval! Ray had many radical political differences with his relatives: he refused to have Daisy's sister Violet Dutt (*née* Lansbury) visit our house in Finchley after she became chief fund-raiser for the Communist *Daily Worker*. He also had trouble tolerating the Right-wing Labour MP for Shoreditch, Ernest Thurtle, who was married to Daisy's sister Dorothy ("Dolly"). His political differences with George Lansbury were quite as great, but his affection remained undiminished. It illuminates Ray's official biography of Lansbury, *The Life of George Lansbury* (Longman Green, 1951).

Why was that regard so durable? I believe it was because Lansbury had a quality of kindness, as well as an almost saint-like urge to do good, which made Ray's proneness to political

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antagonism unthinkable in his case. Kindness, Ray told me late in his life, is one of the most important and desirable of human qualities. Yet the "saints" of this world can be very wearing to their nearest and dearest. Daisy, who was for many years Lansbury's private secretary, was often maddened by his foibles; but Ray, a mite less close to the matter perhaps, regarded them with (for him) remarkable tolerance.

Ray's tendency to political aggression and stubbornness caused him a number of problems. He was a poor "committee man", impatient of discussion, and needed to have his own way. He was Editor, in the late 1930s, of a Socialist pocket-book magazine called *Fact*, financed by Rudolph Messel after the SFC had ceased operations. It was an innovative, high-quality publication and rapidly gained a reputation. Its second issue, on the iniquitous treatment of soldiers in the British Army, was banned by the authorities under some form of Official Secrets legislation, thus ensuring itself first-class publicity. But it ceased publication during the War—killed partly by paper shortages, partly because Messel chose to transfer his resources to helping refugees. Ray managed to antagonise many of the editorial board, which included some of the most distinguished Left-wing intellectuals of the period. He was also Editor of *Tribune* in the early years of the War, but lasted only a couple of years before he got on the wrong side of its major sponsor, Aneurin Bevan.

Later, like many another free-lance over call-up age, he took a government post in the Ministry of Supply, in charge of the control of (his own words) "furs, gloves, and sanitary towels"; subsequently he was moved to some level of control of office machinery; even later he assisted in the nationalisation of the steel industry. As befitted a good patriot, he was reticent about his activities; but I recall his annoyance—indeed offence—when a local tailor from whom he was ordering a suit offered to "meet him half way" over the question of how many clothing coupons would be needed. The War brought a breath of humanity and relaxation to our rigid and stuffy Civil Service without (and this will seem incredible to the present generation) any loss in standards of integrity. Few would, in those days, have been surprised by my father's shock-horror reaction to the suggestion that he might wish to buck the rationing system.

I am sure my father gave the tailor, who called himself, rather charmingly, a "sartorial artist", a stern lecture. But I think that, in general, Ray's experience in the Civil Service ameliorated his aggressiveness and stubbornness. The British Civil Service, as he once commented, is basically a trustworthy decision-taking machine. Its committees wish to get things done and take for granted elementary principles regarding integrity and (usually) the public good. Ministers and politicians may try to bend the system—may sometimes succeed—but generally, and this was particularly true in the wartime and immediate post-War period, the public good is paramount. This ambience was well suited to the moral austerity of my father's socialism for, despite his support of the War, he regarded violent social change as an undesirable last resort. Enlightened, democratic politicians and administrators were to be the mediators of our metamorphosis into a social-democratic state.

At the time, history was in the process of proving him right. The implementation of the Beveridge report, the post-War Labour landslide, our renunciation of India, and innumerable smaller advances in social and political morality gave my father—and indeed almost everyone who was politically aware in the later 1940s—the impression that we were at last entering upon a social-democratic millennium.

For a few years, as far as our War-battered economy permitted, that view was tenable. The era of "I'm all right, Jack; haul up the ladder" and the depredations of union-based greed, whiplashing Britain into an acquisitive, inflationary society, was some years away. So my father, in common with many others who had dedicated their lives to social justice, began to relax and think beyond politics.

At Daisy's instigation Ray allowed himself to be proposed for the Savile Club, of which his father had once been a member, and was duly elected. The Savile was, indeed, still is, one of the more stable of traditional London Clubs: it did not admit women, a fact which caused my vehemently feminist mother remarkably little concern. While in no sense Left-wing, or even political, the Savile has a long-standing literary tradition, a friendliness and informality, even a tolerance of eccentricity, which appealed to my father. At meals one would sit next to whoever was at the central table and converse. No introduction was required, for Anglo-Saxon reserve was considered to be quite out of place. The Savilians were mainly writers, broadcasters, or journalists (of the more serious kind), but a scattering of actors, artists, civil servants, politicians and even the occasional scientist was to be found.

The great feature of the Savile in the 1950-60 era was lunch, particularly on Saturdays. There Ray might meet old friends such as Sir Francis Meynell, Professor G. P. (Gip) Wells, Michael Ayrton, Michael Meyer, as well as innumerable new friends: C. P. Snow, Harry Hoff (*nom-de-plume* William Cooper), Sir Ralph Richardson, Gilbert Harding, Lord Ritchie-Calder, and many others. Ray became quite a pillar of the Savile and a valued member of its Wine Committee: the Savile was then notable not only for the high quality of its food but also for the quality (and cheapness) of its wines. It provided Ray with something that had been missing from his life for over two decades: the equivalent of a University Senior Common Room, where intelligent and creative people might meet and converse, freely and with little affectation (there must always be some), at a reasonably high intellectual level. For Ray, the Savile was a haven of civilised living and friendly company.

He needed such a haven because, when his wartime and post-War stints with the Civil Service ended, he had no job to return to. So he became a free-lance journalist as well as full-time writer, and out of this grew his "Good Food" image.

Ray was always deeply interested in food and drink, sometimes attributing this fascination to having been underfed during the First World War, and sometimes to his father's

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austerity as regards the family housekeeping money. It may, indeed, have originated further back in the family.
family.

Ray's paternal grandfather was Dr John Postgate of Birmingham, a passionate and effective campaigner against the adulteration of food in the early 19th century, whose activities lead directly to the Adulteration Act of 1860 (the precursor of legislation which still protects the national diet). However it arose, it was a deeply-felt interest. I recall a brief holiday with Ray in Belgium in 1953 when, as well as walking me off my feet around Bruges and along the canal to Zeebrugge (for he was a great walker), he added to my physical weariness by spending up to an hour-and-a-half, twice a day, inspecting the menus outside numerous restaurants so as to choose where to have lunch or dinner. We had some interesting, often excellent meals.

Ray's public "Good Food' image came about because, around 1946-48, he was writing a Food-and-Drink column for a bright pocket magazine called *Lilliput* and, dismayed by the low quality of British cooking, particularly in those establishments catering for the general public, he started an informal "Good Food Club" among readers, who wrote to him with names of cafés and restaurants which seemed interested in the quality of the food they served. After the wartime and post-War years of austerity and rationing the idea took off: a deluge of letters began to come in, more than *Lilliput* could handle—and the idea of a published Guide, along the lines of the French *Guide Michelin*, took shape. Ray's dining-room at his house in Finchley took on the appearance of an office, with Daisy as filing clerk, occasional typist, and general factotum; and the *Good Food Guide* was born in 1951.

FROM THE START the *Guide* refused to accept advertising (Ray believed that it biased other guides), and the inspectors were volunteers, unpaid, who agreed not to disclose their identities until after their test meal, if at all. This moral austerity was entirely consistent with Ray's philosophy, and it worked. The *Guide* rapidly gained a reputation for both honesty and reliability, not only among the public at large but, perhaps surprisingly, within the catering profession. Within a few years, sales of the *Guide* approached those of the *Guide Michelin* in France, and copies became part of the normal complement of the British middle-class traveller, whether bent on pleasure or business. Ray became a wine-and-food pundit, quoted in the press, photographed eating spaghetti with a pretty model, interviewed on TV, invited to wine-tastings and openings of chic restaurants, consorting with Food-and-Wine writers. The "Good Food" image took over, rather to Ray's surprise but not to his displeasure. I think he was more disconcerted by an elderly, rather scatty, relative who, perhaps recalling Dr John of Birmingham, went to her grave in the belief that Cousin Ray ran a *Clean Food Club* and even wrote him a letter complaining about ill-washed cutlery.

Soon the *Guide* became too large an operation to be run by Ray and Daisy from their home in Finchley. The Consumers' Association gave it house room, and more staff were recruited, as well as a few (very few) official inspectors, equipped with modest expense allowances. In due course the Association took it over, with Ray as Editor until the year before his death.

The prefaces, which Ray wrote, were as much a feature of the *Guide* as its often trenchant entries. In his valedictory preface for the 1969-70 issue he wrote:

> "When I look back over these twenty years the first thing that stands out is the enormous improvement in British catering. It is difficult now even to remember, let alone to describe, that great grey plain of desolation in 1949, the unending and never-varying sequence of sullen and ill-managed hotels and unfriendly restaurants, serving overcooked meats and sodden vegetables, with no flavours but those that came out of a bottle. . . ."

The improvement was real, and Ray's *Good Food Guide* played a major part in bringing it about.

HOW, ONE MIGHT ASK, does one reconcile so hedonistic a preoccupation as food and drink with the austerity, the puritanism, of the classical Socialist? To put it another way, what right has the dedicated Socialist to concern himself with food and drink when millions of poor and oppressed eke out a dismal existence on a crust and charity?

Ray had no time for such flagellant nonsense—what his friend, fellow-Socialist and gastronome Cyril Ray called "hair-shirt socialism". Ray regarded the *Guide* as a means of bringing greater enjoyment to the masses, irrespective of class. In the 1950s, his *Plain Man's Guide to Wine* had debunked the *mystique* of wine-bibbing and had brought "plonk" to the people; but, in my father's eyes, its greatest achievement had been in protecting the common man from being defrauded, whether by mercenary proprietors or by ignorant wine waiters. So the *Guide* was protecting the common man from exploitation by the ignorant and the venal.

Consistent with these principles, he wrote a column on food and drink for a staunchly working-class Sunday paper, now vanished, called *Reynolds News*—a column which must at times have perplexed its readership of sturdy, ageing cooperators. His high-principled motives in these matters were best displayed in the Babycham case, a legal affair which caused a modest stir in the early 1970s. Babycham is a sparkling perry (pear wine); and, believing that its presentation and advertising might mislead purchasers into thinking it was real champagne, my father published a warning, the text of which I shall not repeat. To his surprise, the manufacturers sued him. The case was long-drawn-out but, after some two exacting years, Ray won. His adversaries were rich and he was not, and his health suffered quite seriously, but it never entered his head to concede that he had been other than correct and fair in his warning. Shortly afterwards, he received the Order of the British Empire; though his citation was as a writer, it was widely believed that his firm stand in the Babycham case played an important part in the choice of this particular time to offer him the honour.

By the mid-1960s, Ray was a distinguished, if maverick, figure: socialist, historian, authority on wine and, to the majority, gastronomic arbiter for the nation. The achieve-

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ment of which he was most proud, his preferred monument, was his dozen or so socio-historical writings which he had produced at home, in the 1920s and '30s, remote and inaccessible in his study at Hendon or Finchley.

But somewhere inside there was still a classicist struggling to emerge. In 1924 he had published, in a limited edition, a translation of the Latin poem *Peruigilium Veneris* (Houghton Mifflin Co., USA) of which his father had, despite their estrangement, expressed grudging approval. For many years he had, on and off, been preparing a new translation of *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, and by 1968 it was ready. The trouble was finding a publisher for so recondite a work. In the event, he subsidised its publication himself and it appeared in 1969, beautifully produced in England by the Rampant Lions Press of Cambridge. Thus was the ghost of J. P. Postgate at last propitiated.

RAY DIED at the end of March 1971, aged 74. He had had surgery for colonic cancer a couple of years before and had enjoyed reasonably good health until the secondaries manifested themselves. My brother Oliver (for the major burden fell on him) arranged, as Ray would have wished, a rather special funeral. There was no mumbo-jumbo about God because, as a dedicated atheist, he would have objected most strongly. So we had poetry, the verse chosen by his sister Margaret and read by Oliver, and *Eine Kleine Nachtsmusik*—one of the few pieces of music Raymond recognised and liked. The problem of devising a funeral ceremony for an unbeliever was successfully overcome; indeed, it received a seal of approval, for the undertaker afterwards complimented us on our good taste.

Cremation over, the mourners, friends and family, returned to Oliver's house, close to my parents' cottage, and we all had wine and a buffet lunch, preceded by a small glass of Tokay, vintage 1865. The point of this story is the Tokay.

Devoted oenophile that my father was, he had learned that the great Hungarian Tokays had the folk-reputation of reviving the dying. He had therefore saved a bottle of especially notable Tokay with the instruction that he should be given some to drink on his death-bed. If it did not work, his mourners were to finish the bottle at his wake. When the doctors told her that all hope for Ray had gone, my mother fulfilled Ray's request by administering a couple of teaspoonsful of the Tokay—therefore informing him, despite his drugged state, of his official prospects—for the doctors had not had the sensibility (I choose my word carefully) to tell him themselves. I believe and trust that doctors are less mealy-mouthed in the way they treat terminal patients today.

The wake was a congenial and reasonably cheerful gathering, as he would have wished. The Tokay had an under-taste of caramel, but it was certainly memorable.

Living Together

"Great lummox." she would say.
"Useless bloody fool."
In this hateful way
they died together.
Or else would sit and stare
like lunatics, like pianists,
sculpted in the pose
of their last note.

Removing her rings
to do the washing up,
she places them on the same
windowsill she has placed them on
for sixty two years,
which is blistered
and tired of rings.

I recall, lately with humour,
her special hatred of his habit,
when faced with a meal,
of always turning his plate around
before eating, and again when half finished.
"Big dafty", she would say.
"Always keeps his potatoes East."

Graeme Hodgson

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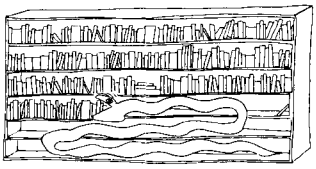
Letter from Russia

Buying Books in Moscow

By Walter Laqueur



BUYING BOOKS in Moscow, like buying most things in the metropole of scarcity, is not easy. Residents of Washington, D.C. will find a greater selection of recent Russian publications in Rockville, residents of London in the Charing Cross Road. But it is still a fascinating pastime, full of surprises. The other day, when passing Kuznetski Most (which has more bookshops than Charing Cross), I saw a queue which, following years of experience, I instantly joined even though, like those in front of me, I had no idea what the reward would be. It happened to be the very first Soviet book on the theme of . . . queuing!

There always was an enormous appetite for books in the Soviet Union, and it is greater now than ever. After decades of conformity and boredom there is something of curious interest to be found in almost every paper and periodical. For many years it was sufficient to glance at *Pravda* once a week; now the day is not long enough to read all the interesting articles. And since many Russian writers have an inclination to be long-winded, their published essays frequently extend to 30 pages or more. There are other reasons for this tremendous interest: Russians traditionally take their literature more seriously than we do, and it has always been seen as more than just entertainment.

IT IS DIFFICULT to buy newspapers and periodicals unless one takes out a subscription: but this, for a variety of reasons, is not easy either. Newspapers arrived at eight in the morning in my hotel, and to have a reasonable chance of obtaining at least one or two, I had to arrive 15 minutes earlier at the kiosk of *Soyuzpechat*, the state agency which monopolises distribution. When my turn came, I asked the lady in charge for one copy each of every publication she had, including sport, agriculture, etc.—a request which did not strike her as unreasonable; many others in the queue did the same. For the most popular weekly, I had to pay twice the price indicated on the masthead, but Soviet newspapers are cheap and I did not argue. All dailies are sold out within an hour. But how to get copies of the monthlies? This is a most difficult assignment, and my enquiries resulted in answers ranging from pity to amusement. The literary journals are, I found, quite unobtainable; some of the others can be bought if one shows sufficient ingenuity and persistence, or has something of a special relationship with one of the kiosk managers.

The alternative is simply to engage in a systematic, methodical search, and this I did on consecutive mornings. At the Kursk railway station, after much prodding, the sales-lady produced a literary magazine, called *Ashkhabad*, published in the capital of the Turkmen Republic, of which she had an unlimited quantity, and for a very good reason; it was quite unreadable. I figured that in the *kolkhoz* markets the demand for the more highbrow magazines would not be that great, an assumption that proved to be partly correct. In one I got a copy of a monthly statistical journal, which had interesting revelations about what kind of information had not been released in the past but would be published in future. In another, a copy of *Sovietskaya Musika*, in a third one a number of *Sovietski Voin* (Soviet Soldier). The musical journal had a reproduction of a Marc Chagall painting on its cover; the military journal, on the other hand, featured an article which said that Soviet patriots had no use for the Jewish symbolism of Chagall and that Josef Brodski, the Russian Nobel prize winner who lives in New York, was not a genuine poet either. In yet another *kolkhoz* market I managed to get a copy of *Chelovek i Zakon* (People & the Law), a popular journal on law in everyday life, as well as a copy of *Semya* (Family) which deals with relations between children and parents, and between the sexes. In Leningrad, I spotted a copy of *Nash Sovremennik* (Our Contemporary), one of the two leading Right-wing monthlies which at one time ran into trouble because it substituted "RUSSIA MY FATHERLAND" for "WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!" on its masthead. But I could buy only on condition that I also bought the whole set for 1987, which I would have done but for what Kundera might have called "the burden of the unbearable weightiness".

THUS, WITH a car and unlimited time, it is still possible to gather an interesting selection of publications—and this is no doubt why major foreign embassies in the Soviet capital now have a person dealing full-time with the purchase of books and periodicals. There is probably more information and items of interest to be picked up in publications than in diplomatic conversations.

There seems to be a genuine paper shortage, yet this has never prevented Russian publishing houses from putting out vast quantities of propaganda material, or novels and poetry, by untalented, but highly-placed and well-connected writers which gather dust in warehouses, libraries and bookshops. *Glasnost* has produced embarrassing statistics about these unread and unreadable publications.

With a few exceptions the publishing houses seem to be more conservative both in outlook and in business practice than the literary magazines. *Roman Gazeta* which publishes every month a relatively new novel in a cheap mass edition (say, a million or two) has not featured in living memory an author outside the neo-Stalinist or "patriotic" camp. Of late,

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there has been a grudging change—more, it would appear, because of political reinsurance than as a result of genuine conviction. It wouldn't have touched with a barge-pole Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*, the novel about Stalin's purges, which is not exactly a literary masterpiece but still a work of great educational importance.[1] According to a professional literary journal which carried out a public-opinion poll, Rybakov's novel was in far greater demand than any other published book during the last two years; it could easily have sold millions of copies. In the event, the book came out in an edition of 1,200,000, was sold within a few days, and can now be bought in one bookshop on Kropotkinskaya street for foreign currency only.

There is no official list of best-sellers yet a general picture emerges from interviews with heads of publishing houses, librarians, and occasional print figures. Nothing has changed with regard to the eternal best-sellers list, topped for a century or more by Alexandre Dumas' *Count of Monte Cristo*. The list of most widely-read, contemporary Soviet authors has been headed for years by one Valentin Pikul, virtually unknown outside Russia. He is the author of a string of historical novels glorifying the exploits of the Czarist armies and, less frequently, of pre-1917 Russian diplomats. The heroes are always Russians, the villains—aliens. As far as Pikul and his readers are concerned, historical materialism has never existed. I surmise that his books would have sold equally well under the Czars.

Among the most widely-read authors now are those who could not be published before (such as some of Platonov's and Bulgakov's works) and, of course, the revelations of the Stalin period (Dudintsev's "White Coats" on Lysenkoism); Granin, Rybakov, Pristavkin (on the persecution of nationalities); and others.

Rybakov's novel has been bitterly attacked by Right-wing critics, but as the result of its first publication (in three instalments) in *Druzhba Narodov* (Friendship of the Peoples), the circulation of this previously very boring publication, quadrupled and reached 800,000. However, it still hasn't caught up with *Novy Mir* which has well in excess of a million subscribers; a fact which, as its editor rightly noted, should be registered in the Guinness Book of Records. During the last two years *Novy Mir* has featured some outstanding novels, old and new, and also many controversial and widely discussed essays about the state of Soviet society and economy.

The mouthpieces of the Right have done less well, with one notable exception—*Moskva*, which owes its success to the ingenious idea of publishing, in instalments, excerpts from Nikolai Mikhailovitch Karamzin's *History of the Russian State*. This is a very well written, romantic-sentimental account of Russia's past, monarchical and conservative in inspiration. It was first published more than 160 years ago, but it has not been reprinted for ideological reasons since the Revolution and there is obviously a great thirst for history in the mode and manner of Sir Walter Scott. In addition, a book of excerpts from Karamzin has just appeared (500,000 copies) and the whole series of 11 volumes will be published soon, again in hundreds of thousands of copies. The cultural gap between West and East could hardly be greater. While social (and Socialist) history, often Marxist inspired, figures prominently in the curricula of our American and West European history departments, the Russians, in their post-Marxist phase, prefer to read about great men and their colourful exploits.

NOT ALL NEWSPAPERS have benefited from the boom. *Trud*, the trade-union paper has stagnated and *Pravda* has slightly declined, the price they had to pay for their official character and the resulting *ennui*. *Izvestia*, on the other hand, which has been more outspoken and controversial, has risen by some 30%. Another category which has suffered from decline are the periodicals dealing with events abroad, such as *New Times*, *Foreign Literature*, and *Za Rubezhom* (Abroad). Events inside the Soviet Union are so much more exciting at the present time than happenings in Washington, Paris, or London. *Foreign Literature* has tried to keep its readers by publishing *Ulysses* in instalments, but even James Joyce does not have the desired effect at a time when provincial journals are featuring Kafka and Orwell.

What makes the literary scene so interesting are the polemics between Left and Right and, also, the fact that some of the most notably outspoken contributions to the economic, sociological, and historical debate have appeared in the literary journals rather than the professional periodicals which, by and large, have changed little. Some, such as *Voprosy Istorii* (the official organ of Soviet historians) were so much opposed to any attempt to re-examine Soviet history that its whole editorial board was dismissed by order of the Central Committee —yet another "revolution from above". On the Right there is an uneasy coalition between anti-Communist conservatives and neo-Stalinists. The latter have not much time for the cult of icons and "old women in old villages", but they do share a common aversion with the national-patriotic "Russia-firsters": namely, a dislike of liberals, pro-Westerners, and Jews.

Nothing of great literary interest has, in my opinion, been published in the journals of the Right during the last two years; they appear to be altogether obsessed with the struggle against Rock and Alcoholism. But I find the essays are frequently worth reading for their extreme frustration, for their *résentiment* and nostalgia for a lost paradise. The Right is openly sceptical about the chances of *perestroika*. Their argument runs, briefly, as follows: As far as economic performance is concerned we shall never be able to compete with the Europeans and the Japanese. But this doesn't really matter that much, for we have "spiritual values" which the others lack, our scale of values is different.

One of the most remarkably poisonous attacks against de-Stalinisation and the political reform movement was written by V. Gorbachov, the deputy-editor of *Molodaya Guardia*, a neo-Stalinist organ. In the name of old-style Communism, the author attacked the "defeatism and materialism of the liberals" and, in general, their destructive influence on all that had been traditionally sacred to loyal Communists. A few weeks later *Moskovski Literator*, the house organ of the Mos-

[1] *Children of the Arbat*. By ANATOLI RYBAKOV. Century Hutchinson, £12.95.

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cow branch of the Union of Soviet writers, leaked the text of a letter which Gorbachov (the editor, not the general secretary) had written to the executive of his union to the effect that he was a man of impeccable political credentials; that his apartment was not roomy enough; and that unless he got a larger one very soon he would commit suicide or some other act of despair. This didn't exactly create a good impression, for while one can feel a certain sympathy with Gorbachov (the claustrophobic editor), most of his colleagues also have small apartments and, in any case, such threats are unbecoming to a man preaching an heroic life-style and a return to the old anti-materialist idea of frugality. In any case, he probably had a *dacha* somewhere outside Moscow. . . .

FOR ME, THE MOST stimulating journal these days is the illustrated weekly, *Ogonyok*, which has a circulation of 1.75m but could easily sell three or four times as many copies; it is an astonishing achievement, for the intellectual level is high; and the readers' letters are as interesting as the articles. *Ogonyok* functions as the bulwark of anti-Stalinism, and it goes about as far as is politically feasible in present circumstances. However, I should warn, one cannot ignore the literary journals of the extreme Right when gauging public opinion. They may not be very influential among Moscow intellectuals, but they have a stronger base outside the capital and among the far-flung bureaucrats. These journals can now openly express "unorthodox" views which, until recently, would have been considered anathema and would have had highly unpleasant consequences for the authors. Thus, it can now be stated that Marxism is an "alien ideology" as far as Russia is concerned; sometimes the "Zionist" origins of Marxism are also emphasised. The organs of the extreme Right cannot yet openly attack Lenin but this, it seems, can be circumvented by denouncing Leon Trotsky when Lenin is meant; the Russian public has been accustomed for decades to read between the lines.

The journals of Russia's far Right find a great deal to admire in Stalin. True, he also committed mistakes but here again the evil influence of Trotsky and other "rootless cosmopolitans" is adduced. Trotsky, we are told, devised and introduced the bureaucratic-military style of command . . . which Stalin later merely copied. The man mainly responsible for the collectivisation of agriculture was not Stalin but Yakovlev, the People's Commissar for Agriculture, whose real name (*sapienti sat*) was Epstein. As far as the Purges were concerned, the main villain was one Mekhlis; the responsibility for the destruction of so many historical sites should be put at the door of Kaganovitch; and the liquidations in Soviet genetics were not the fault of Lysenko, as commonly believed, but of two cosmopolitans named Present and Deborin. . . .

It is only fair to add that arguments of this kind have come in for merciless criticism in the "liberal" journals. But they still have a captive audience in a country in which there has been a very long tradition of dark belief in the sinister machinations of a "hidden hand". In Stalin's time such belief was systematically indoctrinated, but it has also existed before and after.

How free are Soviet publications under *glasnost*? Compared with the situation three years ago, there have been tremendous changes. And yet: compared with the situation in Czarist Russia there is still a long way to go. The taboo zones have been reduced, and there is no advance censorship except on matters of national security. During the last year 3,500 books, previously banned, have been made accessible. But a closer look shows that this list mainly includes proscribed books by Old Bolsheviks and some publications which were erratically censored such as grammars and Russian-language textbooks. In any case, this can be only a tiny percentage of the total number of forbidden books kept out of circulation. At this rate it will take decades until the Soviet reader gains access to all previously banned authors and titles. According to a recent article in *Sovietskaya Kultura*, half the basic sources for the history of Soviet society are still inaccessible. From readers' letters we learn that single volumes of foreign encyclopeadias are still withdrawn from general circulation, and can be consulted only with special clearance. This is a far cry from the situation in Czarist Russia where *Das Kapital* passed censorship without difficulty as an "important contribution to economic science". True, Nietzsche could be published only after the Revolution of 1905, but this was an exception. After the constitution of 1905, many Bolshevik publications saw the light of day. The old *Pravda* was frequently banned, but it could still appear the following day under another title.

THE DESIRE to catch up with what they have missed— *Nachholbedarf* is the term used in post-Nazi Germany—seems to be enormous, and the number of manuscripts waiting for publication almost unlimited. *Novy Mir* published Boris Pasternak's *Dr Zhivago* between January and April of 1988; during the same period, *Znamya* featured Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate*; Andrey Platonov's *Chevengur* appeared in *Druzhba Narodov* in March and April; Zamyatin's *We* could be read in *Znamya* in April and May.

The provincial literary magazines have not been lagging much behind. George Orwell has appeared in a literary magazine in Latvia, Vladimir Nabokov in *Vulga* and *Don*, where less controversial Western fare such as Agatha Christie's *Sparkling Cyanide* can also be found.

Most recently, the Leningrad *Neva* has begun to print the famous "counter-revolutionary" novel of Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, in the excellent translation by the late Andrey Kistyakovski. Dr Chubinski, an historian, noted in his preface the lasting value of Koestler's powerful artistic reconstruction. He also shrewdly observed that Koestler's novel "dealt only with one (and by no means the most cruel) aspect of the diabolical means of the moral and physical destruction of the human personality which had been the practice during the Stalinist terror. . . ."

Under *glasnost*, on the other hand, non-Marxist-Leninist viewpoints can still not be voiced in the political debate— except in some special contexts under the banner of patriotism. However, I must not grumble. Moscow is now an infinitely more interesting place than it has been for decades, and one should be grateful while it lasts.

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LETTERS

Bauer on Foreign Aid

PETER BAUER (ENCOUNTER, April 1988) claims: "Aid played no part in the development of Western Europe. . . ." This surely overlooks the crucial role of US Marshall Plan Aid (1948-53) in the post-War development and recovery of Western Europe. Curiously, Lord Bauer, who is otherwise so critical of foreign aid, does not even refer to Marshall Plan Aid in any of his prolific writings. Would he argue that aid to and within the First World is economically sound and politically laudable but such aid to the Third World is deplorable on every score? Perhaps Lord Bauer's silence on Marshall Aid is yet one more example of the perils of "Double Asymmetry" (Ibid, p. 69)!

ANAND G. CHANDAVARKAR
Washington, D.C.

"THE SUCCESS of the Marshall Plan is a recurrent theme in the advocacy of aid. But the Marshall Plan is irrelevant to the case for Third World aid. The peoples of Western Europe had the faculties, motivations and institutions favourable to development for centuries before the Second World War: rebuilding, not development, was the task after the War. Hence the rapid return to prosperity in Western Europe and the termination of Marshall Aid after four years, in contrast to the economic plight of many aid recipients after decades of aid, and their failure to repay loans obtained on favourable terms; and in contrast also to the proposals for indefinite continuation of official aid." P. T. Bauer, *Equality, The Third World and Economic Delusion* (1981), p. 110.

I have also dealt with the Marshall Plan in *Dissent on Development* (1971).

PETER BAUER
London

Olga & Ezra Pound

FOR YEARS I have been distressed by the down-playing of Olga Rudge in articles about Ezra Pound. Even in the lengthy and fascinating piece by Humphrey Carpenter (ENCOUNTER, June), she is identified only in a footnote as "mother of Ezra's daughter Mary. . . ." Mary herself was indeed rather cold to her mother in the 1971 book *Ezra Pound, Father and Teacher* by Mary de Rachewiltz; but surely the mother of his only daughter deserves more than a footnote.

Although it is my personal conviction that violinist Olga Rudge was the love of Pound's life, I cannot speak for the years before his release from St Elizabeth's and his return to Italy. I met Olga Rudge in 1956 when she was executive secretary to Count Chigi at the international music school, Accademia Chigiana in Siena. She told me little of her background and never mentioned Pound. Yet any reasonably attentive reporter could perceive, in the course of research, her connection with Pound in the "discovery and resurrection" of Vivaldi. Eventually I worked up the courage to face her with this, and we became friends.

She couldn't be near him at St Elizabeth's because the same Americans who locked up Ezra had taken her passport. And she was flat broke. When he came back, he came back to Olga. Hers was the home in Rapallo—little more than a mountain cabin—and hers the home in Venice, a tiny gondolier's house she had bought years before. I visited them often in both of those homes, and they came once to look over my new house, a building on Lago Bracciano, north of Rome.

Ezra was totally lost without Olga, who was the only one who could induce him to speak, however briefly, in those last years. I always wanted to write about her and she always said "No, do Ezra. . . ." Useless to proclaim that half the world was "doing" Ezra. This self-effacing and indomitable little old lady still lives in the Venice home, which she is turning into a Pound museum and library. She gets virtually no help except from the considerate and admiring American administrators of the nearby Peggy Guggenheim gallery. She deserves much, much more.

DORA JANE HAMBLIN
Trevignano Romano
Italy

Theological Tom-tom, Metaphysical Bagpipe

Steiner vs Feuer—By SIDNEY HOOK

IT IS NOT Lewis Feuer's discussion of the Holocaust but George Steiner's rebuke to him that is "almost obscenely impertinent (in the dual sense of the term)". The Holocaust, Steiner suggests, is enough to have made "God Himself . . . speechless". But it hasn't left Steiner speechless. Indeed, his *The Portage of A.H.* is the only rationalisation ever offered, albeit in a speculative vein, of Hitler's infamy. The only thing that approximates it is the view of some fanatically pious Jews that the Holocaust was an act of divine justice, a punishment of Jewry for failing to live up fully to Judaic law. In the light of the details of the *Shoah*, how God differs from Satan is inexplicable.

Steiner repudiates any rational attempt to inquire into the roots and nature of the *Shoah* as a hopelessly shallow and inappropriate approach to a phenomenon whose true character can be grasped only by a "theological-metaphysical perception". But he gives not a hint at what is revealed by this perception, and why it was overlooked by the theological and metaphysical perceptions of the past. What, if anything, can we learn from it to prevent mankind from suffering future Holocausts?

DESPITE Steiner's charge, there is no justification for characterising Feuer's outlook on the Holocaust as "stoical". He believes there was nothing fated in the monumental slaughter of the Jews. Nor is there any reason to accept an intellectual taboo against comparing it with other outrageous actions or even natural catastrophes. Some species in the natural world would have destroyed other species; and the human species (considered purely biologically as animals) has periodically treated some of its members, strangers to local groups, as an enemy-species.

To Feuer, when men are considered as historical and acculturated organisms, the practices of intra-species extermination is *not* an expression of the natural order. Good and evil are human predicates. The evils of Hitler and Stalin are not to be explained by the radical evil of existence, whatever that is. The natural world provides both the basis of human evil and the possibility of limiting and defeating it. The *Shoah* and the *Gulag Archipelago* undoubtedly were largely a consequence of the decisions of Hitler and Stalin. But even if one contends in the light of Steiner's "systematic ontology" of the Holocaust, that Hitler and Stalin were already monsters in their mothers' wombs, it does not relieve us of the rational and moral necessity of inquiring how, and in what way, the societies in which they were nurtured went astray—and shared the responsibility, and to some extent, the guilt, of their crimes. Steiner's ontology may convince him that the *Shoah* is so unique that it can be understood only in terms of "certain theological and metaphysical categories", whose eclipse he deplores but whose defence he strangely avoids.

Professor Feuer does not accept the radical confusion between physics and

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ethics characteristic of all varieties of Stoicism. One does not have to be a rationalist philosopher in any sense to understand that there are good empirical grounds to fear that in our world of inflamed nationalism and religious fundamentalism whole populations may be slaughtered. Whether the scale of destruction and evil is comparable to the infamies of the past is irrelevant to the agenda of political realists. There is nothing in what Feuer wrote to justify Steiner's imputation that Feuer's alleged "stoic outlook" runs the risk of shading into "impatience or indifference or both". There is more warrant to wonder whether, despite the passionate obscurity of Steiner's rhetoric, he is seeking to exorcise these dangers by theological tom-tom and metaphysical bagpipe.

SIDNEY HOOK

Hoover Institute
Stanford, California

Kicking at the Centre

I FAIL TO SEE the point of Donald R. Morris's letter (ENCOUNTER, May). First he criticises me for stating that the German Democratic Republic is misleadingly named, and yet he then goes on to concede that it is indeed misleadingly named and ought to be called the "German Marxist Republic"—a name to which I have absolutely no objection, though German Soviet Socialist Republic would be better still.

Nor do I need to have explained to me the differences between the ways the word "democracy" is used in East and West, and I find it surprising that he regards the cynicism and hypocrisy of Marxist dictatorships as merely "apparent". To anyone living under one of these régimes their cynicism and hypocrisy are very real indeed. He also seems to put forward the strange view that their cynicism and hypocrisy only exist in the minds of the West. . . .

It is clear to anyone who believes that democracy is "government of the people, by the people, for the people", founded on the rights and freedoms outlined in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that the Marxists' use—or abuse—of the term is, at best, misleading. I would go further, however, and say that even according to the Marxists' own definition of the term, the name German Democratic Republic is a travesty of the truth. According to their own *Kleines Wörterbuch der Marxistisch-Leninistischen Philosophie* (East Berlin, 1975), "socialist democracy"—as opposed to the West's hateful "bourgeois democracy" —not only presupposes public ownership of the means of production. It is also intended, they claim, "to integrate the whole people into the direction and planning of the state, the economy and culture, and thus to establish the true supremacy of the people. . . ."

One does not need to talk with Polish or East German workers to realise that this is patently not the case in the GDR or anywhere else in the Eastern bloc. State, economy, and culture are controlled *not* by the people but by the *SED* in collusion with the Kremlin. Indeed, as the *Wörterbuch* readily concedes, socialist democracy is in reality a form of dictatorship; and it cites Lenin in support:

> "The dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, exploiters and capitalists. These people must be suppressed in order to free mankind from the slavery of wages, their resistance must be broken by force, and it is clear that where there is suppression and force there can be no freedom, no democracy. . . ."

Even by Lenin's own devious standards, then, the German Democratic Republic is misleadingly named.

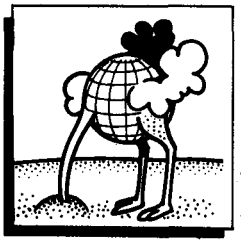
WORDS, TOO, can be hijacked, and democracy is one of a whole series of terms that have been taken over and resprayed by Communist ideologues. The latest fad in Moscow in this direction seems to be "socialist pluralism"—i.e. discussion and elections within the Party apparatus directed from the top—a cynical parody of Western liberal pluralism. When I hear the term "socialist democracy" I am reminded of a joke I was once told in East Berlin: "Why does socialism place Man at the centre of all things? . . . So he can be kicked from all sides."

JOHN D. HALLIDAY

Edinburgh

Western Fantasisers, Still on Their Cycles

Legends about Gorbachov—By SAMUEL HARTLIB



SOME of the discussants of your article on "The Cycles of Western Fantasy" (by Melvin J. Lasky, ENCOUNTER, February 1988) appear to be missing the point.

It is, essentially, not a matter of whether the Soviet régime *wants* change, or *appears to want* change, or that to some extent things *are* changing or sound as if they could, or should, or would change. After all, every decade of the history of Bolshevism from Lenin and Trotsky to Stalin and Khrushchev and Gorbachov has seen significant change, for better or worse (usually the latter).

The point, as I take it, from Lasky and from other critics of the wobbly Western climate of opinion, is that whether or not historic change occurs, the European and American ideologists who dominate the diplomatic and press establishments will go in for sensational "fantasy". The result will be the superficiality, absurdity, illogicality and the like which Lasky documented before the Washington and Moscow Summits. Since the recent Summit, although a small, if hardly discernible measure of mature caution has emerged, there is still the pattern of infantile wishful thinking among the diplomatic experts and obtuse vulgarity among the press pundits.

It is all, mostly, on the level of simple-minded skittishness exhibited by that beautiful young "Miss Moscow", winner of the recent and unprecedented "World Beauty Contest" in Russia. When Mariya Kalinina, 16, was asked by the press how her prize was different from the "bourgeois-capitalist" awards for bathing-suit pulchritude, in notorious Western pageants, it was reported that she thought very deeply and delivered the profound reply, "Ours is different because we have *perestroika*. . . ." (*Daily Mail*, 14 June)

MAY I UPDATE M. J. Lasky's documentation with a few more recent examples?

1. The selling of *perestroika*—surely the leading foreign catch-on phrase since Hitler's *blitzkrieg*—has been pervasive in the West. It is often held to be "even more necessary in the democracies" than in the Communist tyrannies! Thus, the President of the New York City Council, Andrew Stein, writes (*New York Times*, 6 February):

> "The more I learn about the New York City Board of Education's amazing contract with its school custodians, the more I appreciate what Mikhail S. Gorbachov is up against. The hero of *perestroika*—restructuring—would surely find something familiar in an arrangement that rewards sloth and irresponsibility and discourages initiative. . . ."

In turn, perhaps President Stein would do M. S. Gorbachov the favour of taking the lead in showing how one deals with the "familiar" ugly past wherein some tens of millions of Yankee school-leavers (including, maybe, some school

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custodians) perished in the cold wilds of the Minnesota and North Dakota concentration camps. One good turn among colleagues deserves another.

2. One of the star reporters on British television (Ann Diamond, on ITV's *TV-am*) was gushing over satellite pictures which were being relayed from the Moscow Summit. Then she turned to her studio guest (musician, Mike Oldfield) and said: "It makes you proud to be Russian!" Was she claiming Russian blood somewhere in her ancestry? Or was she identifying herself exuberantly with the latest thaw? If only Left-wing London editors and progressive Washington columnists could have a vote in the Moscow primaries! Some in the West have been rushing to "support" Gorbachov, as if there were some kind of overseas postal ballot available to swell the majority in the Leningrad or Odessa *rayon*. Nobody in the West wants to be caught out cheerleading, but for the Moscow candidate, there is flag-waving and would-be long-distance, progressive pride.

3. The American President himself, and his third-rate party of know-nothing advisers, have been guilty of similar deeds which could be called embarassing, or undignified, if they weren't so expected and inevitable. In a little-noted ceremony, the Reagans and the Gorbachovs went down the central staircase to the exit of the Grand Kremlin Palace. There, to quote from the *Tass* agency report, "the President showed the General Secretary the issue of *Time* Magazine that named Gorbachov 'The Man of the Year', and asked for his autograph on the cover. . . ." When the *New York Times* (3 June) reported this, it added "Mr Gorbachov complied" . . . but did not know "whether Mr Gorbachov asked for Mr Reagan's autograph. . . ."

IMAGINE THE DUKE of Wellington asking Napoleon for a first-hand authentic "Bony" autograph! Or Lord North asking General George Washington for his "John Hancock"! But they do these things more free and easy in Hollywood (and in Washington) these days—and also in the hyped-up Western press. When the news reached the Editors of *Time* that Gorby had actually signed one of their magazine covers, they proceeded to take a full-page advertisement in the *Times* to celebrate the calligraphic conquest of the Cold War. They were *so* proud!

4. Finally, there was the "Millennium Celebration Service" at Moscow's Danilov Monastery. One observer noted that the one word which emerged from the Patriarch's address with a clear resonance for the distinguished foreign assemblage (who knew only one, or two, words of Russian) was "*perestroika*". World church leaders present at this moving ceremony might have thought that this wonderfully musical word was part of the ancient liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church —perhaps even that *perestroika* was the Russian for "resurrection".

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Runcie, was marvellously enthused, and described the way that Mr Gorbachov has returned "religion to the mainstream of Soviet life." But was there not a curious irony in his enthusiasm for the Soviet Government?

As Peter Simple II pointed out (in the *Daily Telegraph*, 14 June):

> "At home his church sees itself more and more as the 'opposition to the Government', on every kind of issue from the poll tax to the provision of bus services in rural areas.
>
> Yet in Moscow, the Archbishop is so flattered to take part in the carefully staged celebrations, that he will say almost anything that comes into his head to butter up the government.
>
> Perhaps if Mrs Thatcher invited Dr Runcie and the entire bench of Bishops to a gigantic sherry party at Number Ten, they would suddenly discover that she was bringing 'religion back into the mainstream of British life'. . . ."

But the suspicion is well justified that the British government, and other Establishments in the West, would not find it as easy (as has Mikhail S. Gorbachov) to win them over—the clerisy, the intellectuals, the academics, and the media moguls, are all critical at home and gullible abroad.

SAMUEL HARTLIB

Cambridge

Spies Galore?

J.-F. REVEL (ENCOUNTER, July/August) describes Peter Wright as "an intelligence professional, [who] knows what he is talking about from the inside." Possibly; but his own sister, as reported in the press, called him a compulsive liar who embroidered fact with fiction. In MI5 circles, according to Mr Chapman Pincher, his book is known as "Lie-Hatcher". Yet even Wright did not make the claim attributed to him by M. Revel, who says: "The most disconcerting thing is that Wright managed, in the course of his career, to identify and expose some 40 Soviet spies, who had succeeded not only in landing jobs with MI5 and MI6, but in making rather brilliant careers in those services."

Forty Soviet spies in MI5 and MI6? Nowhere in *Spycatcher* do we find this allegation. Researches into the "1930s conspiracies", we are told, identified altogether nearly 40 probable spies. These were not confined to MI5 and MI6, but spread over various professions and departments, only some of which gave access to secrets. Allowing for exaggeration, we may assume that some of these were loyal citizens who had the bad luck to have known Philby or Blunt at some time.

If future historians are going to take *Spycatcher* as factual, that is bad enough, but further embroidery by contributors, to responsible publications can only make it worse.

E. FULLER

Gillingham
Dorset

"Death Penalty"

THE DEATH PENALTY (see E. J. Mishan, "The Lingering Debate on Capital Punishment", ENCOUNTER, March) is justified for two reasons: First, it helps deter crimes like premeditated murder. As the late director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation J. Edgar Hoover observed, "The professional law enforcement officer is convinced from experience that the hardened criminal has been and is deterred from killing based on the prospect of the death penalty. . . ."

A 1970-1971 study by the Los Angeles Police Department buttressed Mr Hoover's observation. Ninety-nine criminals participated in the study, each giving his reason why he committed his crime unarmed or did not use a weapon. The study revealed a 5-1 ratio of deterrence over non-deterrence as reported by those in the best position to make such a judgment: the criminals themselves.

Second, capital punishment is justified on moral grounds. When, for example, someone has raped and murdered a child, that person has relinquished his right to live. Capital punishment in such a case is an act of retribution and demonstrates that a society and legal system are genuinely dedicated to preserving and protecting the rights and safety of the people. Charity must also be displayed toward the victims of crimes and their families.

If society has the moral right and obligation to act in collective self-defence against aggression emanating from *without*, then society likewise has the moral right and obligation to defend itself against aggression emanating from *within* (e.g., against people who rape and murder children).

HAVEN BRADFORD GOW

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Life & Letters Today

New York City

BARDOLOGY: **Even while she is methodically buttering wheat toast like a prissy English matron, you can sense the hidden emotion in Glenda Jackson. She works her knife in short, staccato swipes at the bread until even the minutest corner of crust is slathered thick with yellow.**

Jackson and Christopher Plummer are in a NYC production of "Macbeth" that has endured three months of bloodletting, real and metaphoric, on the road.

After Plummer suggested that Ken Russell direct "Macbeth", Jackson called Russell, the director who guided her through four movies.

"And he said yes instantly. Then someone rang me up and said he planned to set the play in a—what do you call it?—post-nuclear setting. So I rang him, and he harrumphed a lot. He said he planned to include some object on the stage that would be a symbol for this devastated world."

There is disdain in her voice. "'Ken', I said, 'Do you mean like the head of the Statue of Liberty in "Planet of the Apes?" I mean if it's so omnipresent and all, how come nobody in the play ever mentions the Goddamn thing? If you put Shakespeare in a specific time frame, you hinder the audience's imagination. You take away from the words.'"

Needless to say, Russell dropped out of the project.

NEW YORK POST

Los Angeles

EROS IN ERROR: *A tour operator in California claims she has been harassed by heavy breathers and crank calls since a Yellow Pages advert said she specialised in* **"erotic"** *instead of* **"exotic"** *travel. She is suing for £5.6m damages.*

LONDON EVENING STANDARD

London

TROTSKYISM: **In his "Diary in Exile", Leon Trotsky wrote (26 May 1935): "The state of my health condemns me to reading novels. I picked up a book by Edgar Wallace for the first time. So far as I know he is one of the most popular authors in America and England. It is hard to imagine anything more mediocre, contemptible, and crude. . . .**

By this book alone you can judge to what a degree enlightened England (and of course not England alone) remains a country of cultivated savages. It is the millions of Englishmen and Englishwomen who avidly and excitedly—to the point of fainting spells—gaped at the processions and solemnities of the jubilee of the royal couple, who are voracious readers of Wallace's products. . . ."

THE GUARDIAN

London

UNIONSPEAK: *We are privy not only to the death throes of cloth-cap trade unionism but also to the demise of Trade Unionspeak, now doomed to become a dead language like Latin [Keith Waterhouse writes]. All the lugubrious trade-unionists of the brontosaurus TUC are fluent in Unionspeak. Arthur Scargill spouts it to the manner born. Fragments of it are preserved in the composite resolutions of the TUC and Labour Conferences.*

It was a wonderfully baroque language, full of curlicues and convolutions. Pay offers were not merely unacceptable, they were **totally unacceptable**. *Nor were they merely not big enough, they were* **derisory**. *A trade union leader did not ask, he made* **representations**. *He reported back not to his members but to his* **membership**, *who in turn voted for a* **referral** *back to the executive, where dialogue was* **full and frank** *as befits* **democratic accountability.** *Trade union leaders did not meet management, they* **sat round the table with them** *in the* **process of consultation** *where they either reached* **a measure of accord** *or met with* **typical intransigence**.

Doubtless the obsolescence of Unionspeak by a process of natural wastage was a decision **democratically arrived at** *in a ballot of the Society of Cliché-mongers, Jargon-turners, Platitude-minders, and Allied Skills. But it will be a pity if it is completely lost to the world. Perhaps Trade Union bosses in retirement, will spare us their memoirs and compile a Dictionary of Unionspeak instead.*

DAILY MAIL

Moscow

DRIVING FORCE?: **In the discussions here about the meaning and true extent of Gorbachov's "Perestroika" programme, pride of place in the German radio and television commentaries was given to an English analogy. "It was an unforgettable simile! . . . Just think of England trying to change its entire road traffic from driving on the left to driving on the right! It just can't be done all at once, at a stroke. No, one must be careful and cautious and still move ahead. So the new traffic rules apply at first only to buses and lorries. . . ."**

WELT AM SONNTAG (Hamburg)

New York City

ATROCITY: *We nominate for the "Worst New Language Atrocity" the word* **candidating,** *as in "When she was candidating for her present position. . . ."*

VOGUE MAGAZINE

London

TAKING IT WITH YOU: **Mrs Doris May Fisher-Stokes, the medium of London SE12, left estate valued at nil (net).**

When Mrs Stokes, died last year aged 67, her family claimed they were mystified about what happened to the many thousands of pounds she earned.

THE TIMES

South Korea

CAFÉ HITLER: *The German diplomat in Seoul ripped swastikas off the walls of a fashionable café-restaurant called* **Gestapo.** *As though to make up for this act of vandalism, he then handed out tourist posters of Bavarian castles and Berlin beer-gardens to the somewhat perplexed owners of the establishment. He also insisted on a name change. And because Koreans are usually more accommodating to foreigners than they are to one another, the name was duly changed to* **Gesta IV.**

Germans don't believe in half-measures when weeding out undesirable elements, and similar scenes took place in several other Korean watering-holes, including a place near the exclusive Ehwa Women's University called **Hitler.** *It has been renamed* **"Itler".**

THE SPECTATOR

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THE POLITICAL LANGUAGE OF ISLAM
Bernard Lewis

In this important book, Lewis explains how Islam's political language, having its roots in Islamic scripture and classics, may use metaphors and symbols that do not coincide with those of the Western world. Exploring a wide range of literary and documentary sources in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, he constructs the Muslim frame of reference and allusion that is the key to communication with the Middle East.

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THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA
Arnold Xiangze Jiang

Foreword by Akira Iriye. Introduction by David Roberts.

This is the first comprehensive study in English of the tumultuous course of Sino-American relations told from the perspective of history as it has been taught since 1949 in the People's Republic of China. While arguing that America's diplomacy has been dominated by commercial and political self-interest, Jiang's book is judicious in tone, and free of polemics.

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